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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY ASSERTED, IN Reply to ſome late Pamphlets.

By DANIEL WATERLAND, D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

In Neceſſariis, Unitas:
In Non-neceſſariis, Libertas:
In omnibus, Prudentia et Charitas.

He that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe He hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God, John iii. 18.

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THE INTRODUCTION.

THERE has appeared, very lately, a ſmall Pamphlet, [a] of 76 Pages, intituled, *A Sober and Charitable Diſquiſition concerning the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*; endeavouring to ſhew, that *thoſe in the different Schemes ſhould bear with each other in their different Sentiments*, and ſhould not *ſeparate Communions*. The Treatiſe appears to be written in a good manner, and with a Chriſtian Spirit; on which account it deſerves the more Notice: And the Queſtion debated in it, is undoubtedly important in every View, whether with regard to *Peace* in this Life, or *Happineſs* in the next. And as I have formerly ſpent ſome Time and Pains in diſcuſſing the *Truth* of that high and holy Doctrine, from *Scripture*, *Reaſon*, and *An-*

[a] Printed for *John Gray*, at the *Croſs Keys* in the *Poultry* near *Cheapſide*. 1732.

N. B. There were ſeveral other Pieces which preceded, or ſoon followed it, relating to the ſame Cauſe.

1. Mr. *Nation*'s Sermon, preach'd *Sept.* 8. 1731.
2. A Letter to Mr. *Nation*. By *P. C.* 1732.
3. A Vindication of Mr. *Nation*'s Sermon: With a Letter from Mr. *Nation*.
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5. A Reply to Mr. *P. C.*'s Letter.
6. A Poſtſcript, or a third Letter to Mr. *Nation*. By *P. C.*

tiquity, ſo now I think it concerns me the more, to debate, in like manner, the *Importance* of it: which I ſhall, by God's Aſſiſtance, endeavour to do, fully and fairly, with all due Care and Attention, and with all becoming Reverence for the Subject, as well as Reſpect towards the Reader.

Before I enter upon the main Debate, it will be proper to clear the Way, by ſome preliminary Obſervations concerning the ſeveral ſorts of Perſons who *deny* the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and their Views in doing it; as alſo concerning the Advocates, on the other ſide, who *aſſert* the *Importance* of that ſacred Doctrine, and the *general* Principles on which they proceed.

I. As to the Perſons who *deny* the *Importance* of the Doctrine, they are reducible to three Kinds; being either ſuch as *disbelieve* the Doctrine it ſelf; or ſuch as are in ſome *Suſpence* about it; or, laſtly, ſuch as really *aſſent* to it, as *true* Doctrine. It is with this laſt ſort only, that our preſent Debate is properly concerned. But yet for the clearer apprehending thoſe three *different* kinds of Men, and their *different* Views in joining together ſo far, in the ſame Cauſe, it will not be improper to ſay ſomething ſeverally and diſtinctly of each.

1. Thoſe that *disbelieve* the Doctrine it ſelf, while they join with others in decrying the *Importance* of it, are to be look'd upon as a kind of artful Men, who think it Policy to carry

carry on a Scheme gently and leiſurely, and to ſteal upon the unwary, by ſoft and almoſt inſenſible Degrees. A Method which is indeed commonly *ſlower* in producing the Effect, but is the *ſurer* for being ſo; as it is leſs ſhocking, and more inſinuating. They are content therefore, at firſt, to make Men *cool* and *indifferent* towards the Doctrine; as thinking it a good Point gain'd, and a promiſing Advance made towards the laying it aſide. With theſe Views, both *Socinians* and *Arians*, who diſbelieve the Doctrine it ſelf, may yet be content, for a time, to declare only againſt the *Importance* of it. *Deiſts* alſo may join in the ſame thing, conceiving, that *Indifference*, as to a *prime* Article of Chriſtianity, may in time draw on the ſame kind of Indifference towards *Chriſtianity* it ſelf. They are *Disbelievers* with reſpect to the Doctrine of the Trinity, and with reſpect alſo to all *revealed* Religion: And they will of courſe favour and incourage the Denial of any *Part*, in order to bring on the Subverſion of the *Whole*. However, our preſent Concern is not directly with *Deiſts*, nor with ſuch as *deny* the Doctrine of the Trinity: For our Diſpute now is, not about the Certainty of *revealed* Religion (which is ſuppoſed in our preſent Queſtion) nor about the *Truth* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, (which is alſo *ſuppoſed*;) but about the *Importance*, *Uſe*, or *Value* of it.

2. A *Second* Sort of Perſons, before mentioned, are ſuch as ſeriouſly believe Chriſtianity in the general, and do not *disbelieve* the Doctrine of the Trinity in particular, but *ſuſpend* their Belief of it, and are a kind of *Sceptick*s on that Head. Theſe Men deny the *Importance* of the Doctrine, becauſe they think it *doubtful* whether it be a Doctrine of holy Scripture or no: And they judge very rightly in the general, that a Streſs ought not to be laid upon *Uncertainties*, upon Things *precarious* and *conjectural*, which cannot be *proved* to the Satisfaction of the common Reaſon of Mankind. They are right in *Theſi*, and wrong in *Hypotheſi*, as ſhall be ſhewn in the Sequel. Only I may hint, by the way, that our preſent Debate is not directly with this kind of Men: For they are rather to be referred to what has been written for the *Truth* of the Doctrine, than to what more immediately concerns the *Importance* of it. Yet becauſe the preſumed *Uncertainty*, or *Doubtfulneſs* of the Doctrine, is by theſe Men made the principal Objection againſt the *Importance* of it, and the Author of the *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition* ſeems to lay the main Streſs of the Cauſe there, quite thro' his Performance; it will be neceſſary to give that Objection a place in this Diſcourſe, and to return an Anſwer to it in the general, or ſo far as may be proper; not to draw the whole Controverſy about the *Truth* of the Doctrine, into this other Queſtion concerning the *Importance* of it.

While

While I am ſpeaking of Men *doubtful* in this Article, I would be underſtood of ſerious and religious Men, and not of ſuch Perſons whoſe Minds are purely *ſecular*, and who are *indifferent* to every thing but what concerns this World: Such Perſons are of no Conſideration in our preſent Queſtion; neither are they Men proper to be reaſoned with, as they have no reliſh at all for Inquiries of this Nature. But I proceed.

3. A third kind of Men are thoſe that believe the *Truth* of the Doctrine, but demur to the *Importance* of it. And as *Epiſcopius* was, in a manner, their Father or Founder, and great Leader, they have been frequently called after him, *Epiſcopians*. Theſe are properly the Perſons whom we have here to diſpute with: For they are the Men who make the *Truth*, and the *Importance* of the Doctrine two diſtinct Queſtions, admitting the one, and rejecting the other, or however demurring to it. The Deſign of this *middle Way* was to reconcile Parties, if poſſible, and to favour the *Socinians* ſo far, as to condemn their *Doctrines* only, without condemning the *Men*. But this new and fruitleſs Expedient was very much diſliked by all that had any warm and hearty Concern for the true and ancient Faith. Such Coldneſs and Indifferency, with *regard* to a *prime* Article of Chriſtianity, appeared to many, to be nothing elſe but an artful ſpecious way of betraying it, and likely to do more Miſchief than an open Denial of it. The

ableſt and ſoundeſt Divines, as well *Lutheran* [a] as *Reformed* [b], have reclaimed ſtrongly againſt it, deteſting the *Neutrality* of the *Remonſtrant* Brethren, as tending to undermine the Goſpel of Chriſt. The *Divines* of our Church, however otherwiſe ſuppoſed to be againſt *Calviniſm*, and to favour *Arminianiſm*, yet ſmartly condemned the *Remonſtrants* in that Article. Dr. *Bull*, particularly, appeared againſt them in a very accurate and learned Treatiſe [c], in the Year 1694. And it is worth obſerving, how Dr. *Nicholls* afterwards expreſſes himſelf, in the name of our whole Body. "There is another *Armi-*
"*nian* Doctrine, which we avoid as *deadly*
"*Poiſon*, their Aſſertion that there is *no* Ne-

[a] For the *Lutherans*, I ſhall cite *Buddeus* only, who is as mild and moderate in his Cenſure of *Epiſcopius*, as any of them.

Nimio enim concordiæ, diſſentienteſque tolerandi ſtudio, ea interdum ad Fidem & Salutem minime neceſſaria judicavit, quæ *Vetus Eccleſia* ipſa, *Scripturæ* ſuffragio hac in re non deſtituta, adeo neceſſaria pronuntiavit, ut æternæ Salutis ſpem non habeat qui ea negare aut impugnare auſus fuerit. *Buddei Iſag.* p. 422.

[b] The learned *Witſius* may ſpeak for the *Reformed*.

Injurii in Deum *Remonſtrantes* ſunt, quando palpum obtruſuri, quos plus juſto amant, *Sotinianis*, eos deſcribunt quaſi qui vitam ſuam ex Evangelii præſcripto ſic inſtituunt, ut *Patrem* in *Filio* ejus colant, & ab utroque *Spiritûs Sancti* Gratiam ſanctis piiſque precibus ambire ſtudeant. Quid audiemus tandem? Illine vitam ex *Evangelii præſcripto* inſtituunt, qui *Satisfactionem* Chriſti negantes, *Evangelium* evertunt? Illine *Patrem in Filio* colunt, qui æternum Dei Filium φιλὸν ἄνθρωπον eſſe calumniantur, quem uti talem adorantes convertunt in *idolum*? Illine *piis precibus* Spiritûs Sancti Gratiam ambiunt, qui Spiritum Dei *Accidens*, & *Creaturam*, vel ſaltem *Medium* quid inter Deum & creaturam eſſe blaſphemant? *Witſ.* in Symbol. Apoſtol. p. 76.

[c] Judicium Eccleſiæ Catholicæ de neceſſitate credendi, &c.

"*ceſſity*

"ceſſity of acknowledging Three Perſons in "the divine Nature, nor that Chriſt in par- "ticular is the *eternal Son* of God: This "*Heretical* Notion our Church abominates "and deteſts, as an *heinous Impiety*, and what "was never heard of in the Writings of the "primitive Chriſtians[a]." Thus far He, in relation to our Divines of the Church of *England*.

As to the Divines of the *Separation*, they are known to have been as zealous as any Men could be, for the *Neceſſity* of believing the Doctrine of the Trinity, as the *Sum* and *Kernel of the Chriſtian Religion*, the *Baſis*, or *Foundation* of the Chriſtian Faith. The Teſtimonies of Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Corbet*, Dr. *Manton*, and Dr *Bates*, to this purpoſe, may be ſeen at one View in a late Writer [b]: To Thoſe might be added Dr. *Owen* [c], and Mr. *Lob* [d], and perhaps many more. In ſhort, all Parties and Denominations of Chriſtians,

[a] *Nicholls*'s Defence of the Church of *England*. Part I. Ch. ix. Mr. *Scrivener*, long before, (A. D. 1672) had paſſed the like Cenſure.

Hunc [*Socinum*] non minima ex parte ſecutus *Epiſcopius*, & ipſe *Antiquitatis* (quod norunt Docti) imperitus, *novam* credendi imo & philoſophandi *licentiam*, *regulamque* affectavit: Et—*myſteria* Chriſtianæ Fidei *ſumma*, tam ſingulari & inaudito acumine, vel craſſo potius faſtu, tractavit, ut non pertimeſcat *liberos* cuivis Fideli eos Articulos de S. S. *Trinitate* permittere, abſque quibus conſtans & Fœderalis Fides docuit, nullum ad vitam immortalem aditum patere Chriſtianis. *Scrivener. Apolog. adv. Dallæum, in Præfat.*

[b] Mr. *Eveleigh*'s Preface to a Treatiſe intituled, *The Deity of Chriſt proved fundamental.*

[c] Owen's Vindiciæ Evangelicæ, Præf. p. 64.

[d] Growth of Errour, p. 3, 50, 69, 75, &c.

who appear to have had the *Truth* of the Doctrine at heart, or any good degree of Zeal for it, have contended equally for the *Neceſſity* of believing it, and have refuſed *Communion* with the Impugners of it.

II. I come next to obſerve ſomething of the *general* Principles upon which They build, who aſſert the *Importance* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, and who refuſe Communion with the open Impugners of it.

1. They lay it down as a certain and indiſputable Principle, that there are ſome Scripture-Doctrines of greater *Importance* than others: And they generally make their Eſtimate of that greater *Importance*, by the Relation or Connexion which any Doctrine is conceived to have with Chriſtian *Practice*, or *Worſhip*, or with the whole Oeconomy of Man's *Salvation* by Chriſt[a]; or by its being plainly, frequently, or ſtrongly inculcated in holy Scripture. Doctrines of this Character are commonly ſtiled *Neceſſaries*, *Eſſentials*, *Fundamentals*, *prime Verities*, and the like. Not that I mightily like the Word *Neceſſary*, in this Caſe, being a Word of *equivocal* Meaning, and great *Ambiguity*, leading to Miſtakes, and furniſhing much Matter for Cavils. For when we come to aſk, neceſſary to *what?* or, neceſſary to *whom?* and in what *degree?* then ariſes Perplexity; and there is need of a Multitude of *Diſtinctions* to ſet the Matter

[a] See Dr. *Sherlock*'s Vindication of the Defence of Dr. *Stillingfleet*. Printed in 1682. Ch. 5. p. 256, &c.

clear,

clear, ſo as to ſerve all poſſible Caſes. A Doctrine may be ſaid to be *neceſſary* to the Being of the *Church*, or to the *Salvation* of *ſome* Perſons ſo and ſo qualified, or to the Salvation of *all:* And many Queſtions may ariſe about the preciſe *Degree* of the Neceſſity in every Inſtance. But it is eaſily underſtood how one Doctrine may be ſaid to be more *important* than another; as more depends upon it, or as it more affects the *Vitals* of Chriſtianity, than Doctrines of another kind: And we need look no further than to the Nature and Reaſon of things, and to the Analogy of Faith, to be able to diſtinguiſh what Doctrines are thus *important* in the general, and what not. Yet there is no giving an exact Catalogue of thoſe *important*, or *fundamental* Doctrines; tho' it is for the moſt part eaſy to ſay of any particular Doctrine which may be mention'd, what Claſs it may be reaſonably referred to; and whether, or how far, it may be worth contending for. We cannot give a compleat Catalogue of *Virtues*, any more than of *Articles* of *Faith*, ſo as to be poſitive, that thoſe *particular* Virtues, and in ſuch a particular *Degree*, are neceſſary to all Perſons, or to any Perſon that ſhall be named. The preciſe *Quantity* of *Virtue* (if I may ſo call it) abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, is no more to be defined, than the preciſe Quantity of *Faith*. Yet we know, in the general, that *ſincere* and *univerſal* Obedience to what God commands (allowing for Infirmities) is neceſſary to Salvation;

vation: And in like manner, ſincere and univerſal *Aſſent* to what God reveals, makes up the other *Part* of the Terms of Acceptance; as *Faith* and *Obedience* together make up the *Whole*.

2. They who aſſert the *Importance* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, take it for granted, among Chriſtians, that *Faith* in the Goſpel of Chriſt, is neceſſary to the Salvation of all Men, who are bleſſed with Goſpel Light; and that Men ſhall periſh eternally for *Unbelief*, for rejecting that Goſpel-Faith, once ſufficiently propounded to them: *Go ye into all the World, and, preach the Goſpel to every Creature: He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned* [a].

3. They conceive farther, that as we are in Duty bound to *receive* the Goſpel-Faith, ſo are we likewiſe obliged, and under pain of *Damnation*, to preſerve it *whole* and *entire*, ſo far as in us lies; and neither to *deprave* it our ſelves, nor to take part with them that do. It is our bounden Duty to *hold faſt the Form of ſound words——in Faith and Love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus* [b]: To be *ſound in the Faith* [c]: To *ſpeak things which become ſound Doctrine* [d]: To *examine whether* we *be in the Faith* [e]; and in a word, to *contend earneſtly for the Faith once delivered unto the Saints* [f]. So much for the

[a] Mark xvi. 15, 16. compare John iii. 36. Revel. xxi. 8.
[b] 2 Tim. i. 13. [c] Tit. i. 13. ii. 2. [d] Tit. ii. 1. 1 Tim. i. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 3. [e] 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *comp.* Revel. xiv. 12. [f] Jude 3. *comp.* 1 Tim. iv. 6.

Obliga-

Obligations we lie under, to keep the Faith of Chriſt *whole* and *undefiled*. Next, we are to obſerve how *dangerous* a thing it is, to *corrupt* the true Faith in any heinous Degree, either by *adding* to it, or *taking away* from it. One of the earlieſt Inſtances of groſs Corruption by *adding* to the Faith of Chriſt, appeared in the converted *Jews*, or *Judaizing* Chriſtians, who taught the *Neceſſity* of obſerving Circumciſion and the Law of *Moſes*, together with Chriſtianity. Againſt thoſe falſe Apoſtles, who taught ſuch pernicious Doctrine, St. *Paul* drew his Pen, looking upon them as Subverters of the Goſpel of Chriſt [a]. And he was ſo zealous in that matter, as to ſay, *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed* [b]. Where by *another Goſpel*, he does not mean another Religion ſubſtituted in the room of Chriſtianity; (for thoſe falſe Teachers were *Chriſtians* ſtill, not *Apoſtates*) but ſome *adulterous* Mixtures, tending to evacuate the Goſpel-Law, and to *fruſtrate* the *Grace* of God [c].

I ſhall give a *ſecond* Inſtance of groſs Corruption; not in adding to, but in *taking from* the Chriſtian Doctrine, in an Article of very great Importance. There was in the Days of the Apoſtles, and after, a Sect of Opiniators, who, (whether being aſhamed of the Croſs of Chriſt, or whether thinking it impoſſible

[a] Gal. i. 6, 7. [b] Gal. i. 8. [c] Gal. ii. 21. v. 2.

for

for *God* to become *Man* [a]) were pleaſed to deny that Chriſt Jeſus had any *real* Humanity, but that he was a kind of walking *Phantom*, or *Apparition*; had no human Fleſh, but impoſed upon the Eyes, and other Senſes of the Spectators. Theſe Men were afterwards called *Docetæ*, and *Phantaſiaſtæ*; which one may well enough render *Viſioniſts*, or *Viſionaries*. We are next to take notice, how St. *John* treated them, and what Directions he gave to other Chriſtians concerning them. He conſider'd them as deluding Teachers, that ſubverted Foundations; and he gave them the Name and Title of Antichriſts. *Every Spirit that confeſſeth not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh, is not of God. And this is that Spirit of Antichriſt* [b], &c. In another Place, ſpeaking of the ſame Men, he ſays, *Many Deceivers are entred into the World, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the Fleſh: This is a Deceiver, and an Antichriſt* [c]. It is manifeſt that he does not point his Cenſure at the *Jews*, who denied that the *Meſſiah* was come; for he ſpeaks of *new* Men that had then lately *entred into the World*, whereas the *Jews* had been from the Beginning; Beſides, that the *Jews* did not deny that *Jeſus* (or the Man called *Chriſt Jeſus*) had come *in the Fleſh*.

[a] Alii quoque Hæretici uſque adeo Chriſti manifeſtam amplexati ſunt *divinitatem*, ut dixerint illum fuiſſe ſine carne, & totum illi ſuſceptum detraxerint hominem, ne decoquerent in illo *divini* nominis poteſtatem, *&c. Novat.* c. xxiii. *p.* 87. *Edit. Welchman.*

[b] 1 John iv. 3. [c] 2 John 7.

Therefore,

Therefore, I ſay, St. *John* levelled not this Cenſure of his againſt the *Jews*, but againſt ſome Chriſtian Hereticks of that Time, and thoſe particularly that denied our Lord's Humanity; in oppoſition to whom, he exhorts the Brethren to *abide in the Doctrine of Chriſt* [a], and not to receive the Gainſayers into their *Houſes*, nor to ſalute them with *God ſpeed*, leſt they ſhould become thereby *Partakers* of their *evil Deeds* [b]. By *evil Deeds* I underſtand the Overt-acts of that *Hereſy*, the teaching, ſpreading, and inculcating it. Thus *Hereſies*, that is, the teaching or promoting of pernicious Doctrines, are reckoned among the *Works* of the Fleſh [c], by St. *Paul*: who alſo calls falſe Teachers *deceitful Workers* [d], and *evil Workers* [e]; becauſe the promoting and encouraging of falſe and dangerous Doctrines, is a very ill *Practice*, a wicked *Employ*: which I hint, by the way, for the clearer Explication of St. *John*'s Meaning in the Phraſe of *evil Deeds*.

I ſhall mention a *third* Scripture Inſtance of groſs Corruption in Doctrine, which was the denial of a future *Reſurrection*; dangerous Doctrine, ſubverſive of Chriſtianity. St. *Paul* very ſolemnly *admoniſhed* the *Corinthians* [f], to prevent their giving ear to ſuch pernicious Suggeſtions: And he afterwards excommunicated *Hymeneus*, *Philetus*, and *Alexander*, for

[a] 2 John 9. [b] 2 John 11. [c] Gal. v. 19, 20.
[d] 2 Cor. xi. 13. [e] Philip. iii. 2. [f] 1 Cor. xv.

ſpreading

ſpreading and propagating them, delivering the Men over to *Satan*, that *they* might *learn not to blaſpheme* [a].

From the three Inſtances now mentioned, it may ſufficiently appear, that the corrupting or maiming Chriſtianity in its *Vitals*, by denying or deſtroying its prime Articles, or fundamental Doctrines, is a very *dangerous* thing; and that we are obliged, under pain of Damnation, neither to do it our ſelves, nor to abet, countenance, or encourage thoſe that do, by communicating with them.

4. But it is farther to be obſerved, that in *ſlighter matters*, in Things not nearly affecting the *Vitals* of Chriſtianity, the Rule is for Chriſtians to bear with one another; not to divide or ſeparate, but to agree among themſelves; ſo to diſagree in harmleſs Opinions, or indifferent Rites, as to unite in Faith and Love, and in Chriſtian Fellowſhip [b]. *Peace* is a very valuable Thing, and ought not to be ſacrificed even to *Truth*; unleſs ſuch Truth be *important*, and much may depend upon it. A Man is not obliged, in all Caſes, to declare all he knows; and if he does declare his Sentiments, and knows them to be *true*, yet he need not inſiſt upon them with Rigour, if the Point conteſted be of a ſlight Nature or Value, in Compariſon to the Church's *Peace*. Let him enjoy his own *Liberty* in that Caſe; and let Others have theirs too; and ſo all will be

[a] Compare 1 Tim. i. 20. 2 Tim. ii, 16, 17, 18.
[b] Rom. xiv. xv. Coloſſ. ii. 16, 17.

right. Let them *differ*, ſo far, by Conſent, and yet live together in Peace and Charity. But then, as to *weighter* Matters, it concerns us carefully to obſerve, that Rules of *Peace* are but ſecondary and ſubordinate to thoſe of *Piety* or *Charity*, and muſt veil to them. *Peace* muſt be broken in this World, whenever it is neceſſary to do it for the ſecuring *Salvation* in the next for our ſelves, or others: And a Breach of Peace, in ſuch Inſtances, is Obedience to the higher Law of *Charity*, is conforming to the primary and great Commandments, the *Love of God*, and the *Love of our Neighbour*. Therefore *Peace*, in ſuch Caſes, muſt be ſacrificed to *Truth* and *Charity*, that is, to the Honour of God, and the eternal Intereſts of Mankind.

Theſe Things premiſed, it remains now only to inquire, what kind of a Doctrine the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is; whether it be of ſuch a ſlight and indifferent Nature, as not to be worth the inſiſting upon at the Expence of *Peace*; or whether it be of ſuch high Value and Importance, that it ought to be maintained as an *Eſſential* of Chriſtianity againſt all Oppoſers. This is the great Queſtion now before us, and I ſhall endeavour to examine into it with due Care and Application.

The Gentlemen who look upon it as a *non-fundamental*, have ſeveral Things to urge, but ſuch as may moſt of them be reduced to three Heads, as follow. 1. That the received Doctrine of the Trinity is not *clear* enough

to

to be admitted for a Fundamental. 2. That it is meerly *ſpeculative*, or however, not *practical* enough to be important. 3. That it is not ſufficiently inſiſted upon in Scripture, as of *Neceſſity* to Salvation. Now, in return to theſe three Conſiderations, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, in ſo many diſtinct Chapters, that the Doctrine is ſufficiently *clear*, and alſo *practical*, and inſiſted upon likewiſe in *Scripture*, as much as the Nature of the thing needs, or requires.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY ASSERTED, &c.

CHAP. I.

Shewing that the Doctrine of the Trinity is sufficiently clear *to be admitted as a* fundamental *Article.*

CLEAR may be considered in two Views, either with respect to the *Matter* of the Doctrine, or with respect to the *Proofs* upon which it rests. Let us examine the thing both ways.

1. It may be suggested, that the Doctrine is not *clear*, with regard to the *Matter* of it: It is *mysterious* Doctrine. Be it so: The tremendous *Deity* is all over *mysterious*, in his *Nature*,

CHAP. I. and in his *Attributes*, in his *Works* and *Ways*. It is the Property of the *divine* Being to be *unſearchable:* And if he were not ſo, he would not be *divine*. Muſt we therefore reject the moſt certain Truths concerning the *Deity*, only becauſe they are *incomprehenſible*, when every thing almoſt belonging to him muſt be ſo of courſe? If ſo, there is an end, not only of all *revealed* Religion, but of *natural* Religion too; and we muſt take our laſt Refuge in downright *Atheiſm*. There are *Myſteries* in the Works of Nature, as well as in the Word of God; and it is as eaſy to believe Both, as one. We do not mean, by *Myſteries*, Poſitions altogether unintelligible, or that carry no Idea at all with them: We do not mean unſenſed Characters, or empty Sounds: But we mean Propoſitions contained in *general* Terms, which convey as *general* Ideas, not deſcending to *Particulars*. The Ideas are *clear* ſo far as they go; only they do not reach far enough to ſatisfy Curioſity. They are Ideas of *Intellect*, for the moſt part; like the Ideas which we form of our own *Souls:* For *ſpiritual* Subſtance, at leaſt (if any Subſtance) falls not under *Imagination*, but muſt be *underſtood*, rather than *imagined*. The ſame is the Caſe with many *abſtract* Verities, in *Numbers* eſpecially; which are not the leſs Verities for being purely *intellectual*, and beyond all *Imagery*. *Reaſon* contemplates them, and *clearly* too, tho' *Fancy* can lay no hold of them, to draw their Picture in the Mind. Such, I ſay, are our Ideas of the divine

vine Being, and of a Trinity in Unity; Ideas of *intellect*, and *general*; intelligible as far as the Thing is revealed, and aſſented to ſo far as intelligible. We underſtand the *general* Truths, concerning a *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*: We underſtand the general Nature of an *Union* and a *Diſtinction*; and what we underſtand, we believe. As to the minute Particulars relating to the *Manner*, or *Modus* of the Thing, we underſtand them not: our *Ideas* reach not to them, but ſtop ſhort in the Generals, as our *Faith* alſo does. For, our *Faith* and our *Ideas* keep pace with each other; and we *believe* nothing about *Particulars* whereof nothing is *revealed*[a], neither expreſsly, nor conſequentially. CHAP. I.

Such a *general* Aſſent as I have mention'd, is what we give to the Truth of the divine Perfections, *Neceſſary-Exiſtence*, *Eternity*, *Ubiquity*, *Preſcience*, and the like[b]. Whatever Obſcurity, or Defect there is in our Ideas of thoſe divine Attributes, we think it no good Reaſon for denying either the *general* Truths, or the *Importance* of them. So then, no juſt Objection can be made againſt the *Importance* of any Doctrine, from its *myſterious* Nature. The moſt myſterious of all are in reality the moſt important; not becauſe they are myſterious, but becauſe they relate to Things *divine*, which muſt

[a] See the Subject of *Myſteries* treated of more at large, either in my *Firſt Defence*. Qu. XXI. p. 308, &c. Or in *Norris*'s Account of Reaſon and Faith, p. 117, 118. Or in Mr. *Brown*'s Lecture Sermons for Lady *Moyer*, p. 257.——262.

[b] See my *Firſt Defence*, Qu. XXI. p. 306, &c. *Second Defence*, Qu. XXI. p. 425, *alias* 430.

Chap. I. of courſe be myſterious to weak Mortals, and perhaps to all *Creatures* whatever. But even myſterious Doctrines have a *bright* Side, as well as a *dark* one; and they are *clear* to look upon, tho' too deep to be *ſeen through*.

It has been ſometimes objected, that however *clear* the Doctrine may ſeem to be to Men of Parts and Learning, yet certainly it cannot be ſo to *common* Chriſtians. But why not to *common* Chriſtians, as well as to others? It is as clear to them as moſt other high and divine Things can be. It is as clear, for inſtance, as the divine *Eternity*, or *Omnipreſence*. Every *common* Chriſtian profeſſing Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, to be ſo diſtinct as not to be one the other, and ſo united as to be one God, has as clear an Idea of what he ſays, as when he prays, *Our Father which art in Heaven*; or when he repeats after the Pſalmiſt, *Thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and ſpieſt out all my ways*[a]. And, I am perſuaded, upon Examination, he will be as able to give as good an Account of the one, as he will of the other. The Thing is *plain*, and *intelligible* in either caſe, but in the *general* only, not as to the *particular* manner. Aſk, *how* Three are one, and probably both Catechumen and Catechiſt will be perfectly at a Nonplus: Or aſk, *how* God is in Heaven, and *how* about our *Path*, or our *Bed*, and they will Both be equally confounded. But, by the Way,

[a] Pſalm cxxxix. 2.

let

let it be here conſidered, whether *common* Chriſtians may not often have *clearer* Ideas of thoſe Things, than the bolder and more inquiſitive, becauſe they are content to reſt in *generals*, and to ſtop at what they *underſtand*, without *darkening* it afterwards by Words without Knowledge. The Notion of *Eternity*, for Inſtance, is a clear Notion enough to a *common* Chriſtian: But to a Perſon that perplexes himſelf with nice Inquiries about *Succeſſion*, or *paſt* Duration, that very firſt Notion which in the general was clear, may become *obſcure*, by his blending Perplexities with it. The like may be ſaid of *Omnipreſence*: The *general* Notion of it is competently clear: But when a Man has been perplexing his Thoughts with curious Inquiries about a *ſubſtantial* or a *virtual* Preſence, about *Extenſion* or *Non-extenſion*, and the like; I queſtion whether at length he may come away with ſo clear or juſt Ideas of the main Thing as may be found in any *common* Chriſtian. So again as to *divine Fore-knowledge* and *Free-will*, they are both of them clearly underſtood, as far as they need be, by every plain Chriſtian; while many a conceited Scholar, by darkening the Subject with too minute Inquiries, almoſt loſes the Sight of it. In like manner, to apply theſe Inſtances to our preſent Purpoſe, *common* Chriſtians may ſometimes better preſerve the true and right *general* Notion of the Doctrine of the Trinity, than the more learned Inquirers: And it is obſervable, what *Hilary* of *Poictiers*, an honeſt and a knowing Man of

CHAP. I.

the 4th Century, testifies, that the *Populace* of that Time, for the most part, kept the true and right Faith in the Trinity[a], when their *Ministers*, several of them, by prying too far into it, had the Misfortune to lose it.

While I am treating of the Case of *common* Christians, I cannot omit the mentioning a Artifice much made use of by those who would depreciate the Doctrine of the Trinity, as not *clear* enough to be an *important* Article: They first enter into all the Niceties and Perplexities which subtle Disputants have ever clogged the Subject with, and then they ask, whether *common* Christians can be supposed to see thro' them. No certainly: neither need they trouble their Heads about them. It is one Thing to understand the *Doctrine*, and quite another, to be Masters of the *Controversy*. It is not fair dealing with us, to pretend it necessary for every common Christian, if he believes in the Trinity, to form just Conceptions of it in every minute particular: For, by the same Argument, it might as well be pleaded, that they are not obliged to believe in *God*, nor indeed in any Thing. God is without *Body*, *Parts* or *Passions*, according to the first Article of our

[a] Et hujus quidem usque adhuc Impietatis Fraude perficitur, ut jam sub Antichristi Sacerdotibus *Christi Populus* non occidat, dum hoc putant illi Fidei esse quod vocis est. Audiunt *Deum* Christum; putant esse quod dicitur. Audiunt *Filium Dei*; putant in Dei nativitate inesse Dei veritatem. Audiunt *ante tempora*; putant id ipsum ante tempora esse quod *semper* est. Sanctiores Aures *Plebis*, quam corda sunt Sacerdotum. Hilar. *contr. Auxent.* 1266. Edit. Bened.

Church,

Church. How many minute perplexing In- CHAP. I.
quiries might there not be raiſed upon the three Particulars now mention'd? And who can aſſure us, that *common*, Chriſtians may not be liable to entertain ſome wrong Conceptions in every one of them? Muſt we therefore ſay that the *general* Doctrine of the Exiſtence of a Deity is not *clear* enough to be important Doctrine, or that *common* Chriſtians are not bound to receive it as a *neceſſary* Article of their Faith? See how far ſuch Objections would carry us. But ſince theſe Objections ought to have no Weight at all in other parallel Caſes, or nearly parallel, they ought certainly to be the leſs regarded in reſpect to the Doctrine of the ever bleſſed Trinity. Let but this Doctrine have as *fair Uſage* as other chriſtian and important Doctrines are allowed to have, and then I am perſuaded, there will be no Pretence left for ſaying, that it is not a *clear* Doctrine, clear in the general, clear in the main Thing, to any Chriſtian whatever. It is horrible Miſrepreſentation of the Caſe, to pretend as if we taught, that "the eternal Intereſt of every "*Plowman* or *Mechanick* hangs on his adjuſt-"ing the Senſe of the Terms, *Nature, Perſon,* "*Eſſence, Subſtance, Subſiſtence, Coequality, Coeſ-*"*ſentiality,* and the like." No; thoſe are *technical* Terms, moſt of them, proper to Divines and Scholars: And not only *Plowmen* and *Mechanicks*, but very great *Scholars* too, lived and died in the conſcientious Belief of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, long before any of thoſe *Terms*

CHAP. I. came in. They are of uſe indeed for ſettling the *Controverſy* with greater Accuracy among *Divines*, who underſtand ſuch Terms: But the *Doctrine* itſelf is *clear* without them, and does not want them, but ſtands firm and unſhaken, independent of them. Any plain Man may eaſily conceive, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt are properly *divine*, are not one the other, and yet are *one God*, by an intimate Union; and that the Son in particular, being God and Man, is *one Chriſt*. Theſe prime Verities and whatſoever elſe is neceſſarily implied in them, may be conceived to be *right*; and whatſoever is contrary to them, or inconſiſtent with them, will of conſequence be *wrong*. This is enough for any plain Chriſtian to know or believe; and he is not ordinarily obliged to be more minute in his Inquiries, or to underſtand *ſcholaſtick* Terms. It is not to be expected that *common* Chriſtians ſhould be expert *Diſputants* in Controverſies of *Faith*, any more than that they ſhould be profound *Caſuiſts* in relation to *Practice:* Yet Chriſtian Practice is *neceſſary* to Salvation, and ſo is Chriſtian *Faith* too; and the Obligation to *obey* a *general* Precept, or to *believe* a *general* Truth, is not ſuperſeded, or evacuated by a Man's being unacquainted with Terms of Art, or by his being liable to miſtake in ſome remote, or minute Circumſtances belonging to the Doctrine itſelf.

To make the Thing yet plainer, let us take ſome *general* Rule of Chriſtian Practice; the Rule, ſuppoſe, of *dealing with others as we would*

be

be dealt with: A Rule of ſuch *Importance*, that, by our Lord's Account of it, it is the Sum and Subſtance of *The Law and the Prophets* [a]. Surely then, it is a Rule deſigned for *common* Chriſtians, and ſuch as both deſerves and requires their moſt careful Notice. Next, let us view this Rule under all its Minuteneſſes, or Particularities; its Diſtinctions, Limitations, and Explications, with which it is dreſſed out by knowing and able Divines [b]. Obſerve thereupon, what an operoſe Buſineſs is made of this ſo plain and familiar Rule, what Pains are taken to clear it of all ſeeming Repugnancies, to make it *reaſonable*, to make it *certain*, to make it *practicable*, and to guard it moſt effectually againſt the many *poſſible* Ways, whereby it may be miſconſtrued, eluded, perverted, fruſtrated. Are *common* Chriſtians equal to all thoſe Niceties, or are they able to graſp them? I conceive, not. And yet I dare be confident that a plain unletter'd Man, of tolerable Senſe, and who has not a Mind to deceive himſelf, might be ſafely truſted with the naked Rule, and would but ſeldom, if ever, either miſ-underſtand it (ſo far as concerns his own Caſe) or miſapply it. He would keep the plain even Road, and would ſcarce believe the Man that ſhould tell him, that it was ſtrowed with Thorns, or that hundreds had been, or might be either

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[a] Matt. vii. 12.

[b] See particularly Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*'s Sermon on *Matt.* vii. 12. ſeparately publiſhed in 1709. And *Collier*'s Eſſay of Honeſty, P. II. iv. p. 56, &c.

em-bra

CHAP. I. embarraſſed in it, or bewildred by it. The ſame Thing is true with reſpect to the *general* Doctrine of the Trinity. For tho' there are many poſſible ways of miſtaking it, or perverting it (as there are many *crooked* Lines to one *ſtreight*) and it concerns *Divines* to guard minutely againſt all; yet leſs may ſuffice for *common* Chriſtians; ordinarily, I mean at leaſt. The *Right Faith* in the Trinity is ſhort, and plain; and whatever Croſſes upon it, is *wrong*: *Index eſt rectum ſui, & obliqui*: Truth ſhows itſelf, and is for the moſt part to every honeſt Mind a Guard ſufficient againſt the Mazes of Error.

I have dwelt the longer upon this Article, becauſe the Objection about *common Chriſtians*, appears a popular and plauſible one, and is often repeated in this Cauſe, tho' there is really no Weight in it. The Author of the *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition* need not be in Pain for *common Chriſtians*, leſt they ſhould not *have skill enough to unite the two natures in Chriſt without confounding them, or dividing the Perſon, in their Apprehenſions* [a]. They will as eaſily conceive that God and Man is *one Chriſt*, as that Soul and Body is one Man; and they need not look farther. Without troubling themſelves at all with the Names either of *Natures* or *Perſons*, they may joyfully and thankfully remember, that he *who is over all God bleſſed for ever* [b], became a *Man* for their Sakes, and *died* for them, in order to bring

[a] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, *p.* 22. [b] *Rom* ix. 5.

them to God. What is there in all this, that ſhould either offend or perplex, or ſhould not rather greatly edify *common* Chriſtians? They may be *more accurate in their Thoughts on this Head, than the great Patriarch and Abbot* Neſtorius and Eutyches[a], (for they were not both *Patriarchs*, as this Author ſtiles them) becauſe they'll indulge their Fancies leſs, and reſt in the *general* Truth, without drawing a falſe *modus*, or any *modus* upon it, either to corrupt, or to obſcure it: They will abide in the true Doctrine, without defiling it, (as thoſe great Men did) with over officious and preſumptuous Speculations. It may be allow'd, that *common* Chriſtians *have but very little Apprehenſion*[b] of ſome minute or remote Conſiderations given in by way of Anſwer to as minute and remote Objections, in order to clear the Doctrine in every Punctilio: And in like manner, they have but *very little Apprehenſion* of ſeveral ſuch remote Conſiderations thrown in by Divines, in their Diſputes with *Atheiſts* or *Deiſts*, in order to clear the Doctrine of the *divine Being and Attributes*, or of the *Authority of Scripture*, and to make every thing at length conformable and conſiſtent. But what then? does it therefore follow, that *common* Chriſtians may not believe in God, or in God's Word, or that ſuch Belief is not *important*? *Common* Chriſtians believe enough, if they believe the main things under a *general* View, without

CHAP. I.

[a] *See* Sober and charitable, *&c. p.* 22.
[b] *See* Sober and charitable, *&c. p.* 23.

branching

CHAP. I. branching them out into all the minute particulars, which depend upon them, or belong to them. Let *Divines* ſee, that every Article of Faith is clear and conſiſtent throughout, when traverſed as far as the acuteſt Objector can carry it: But let *common Chriſtians* be content with every Article in its native Simplicity, as laid down in Scripture for *Edification* of the Faithful, and not as it appears in controverſial Books, or Confeſſions, with all its Armour about it, for the Conviction or Confuſion of Gainſayers. But I am afraid I have exceeded on this Head, and have overburdened the Reader. Upon the Whole, the Doctrine of the Trinity muſt be allowed to be ſufficiently *clear*, as to the *Matter* of it.

2. The next Conſideration is, that it is *clear* alſo, as to the *Proofs* upon which it reſts: It may be *clearly proved*, as well as *clearly conceived*. Indeed, the *Truth* of the Doctrine ought to be *ſuppoſed* in our preſent Queſtion, as previouſly known and admitted. Accordingly, our *remonſtrant Brethren*, who firſt diſputed the *Importance* of our Doctrine, made no Scruple of allowing the *Truth* of it, as I have before hinted. They allowed the Scripture Proofs to be ſo far *clear*, as to oblige us to admit the Doctrine for a certain Truth [a].

[a] Hinc colligo, mirum videri non debere, ſi tribus hiſce perſonis *una eademque natura* divina tribuatur, cum iis ſcriptura *divina*, iſtas perfectiones, quæ naturæ divinæ propriæ ſunt, tam *exertè* attribuat.

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. l. iv. Sect. ii. c. 32. *p.* 333.

Neither are we much beholden to them for this ſeeming Courteſy, ſince the Proofs are ſo numerous, and ſo cogent, that every ingenuous and ſenſible Man muſt plainly ſee, that were *Scripture* alone to decide the Queſtion, and no falſe *Philoſophy* or *Metaphyſicks* brought in to confound or perplex it, there could ſcarce be any room left for debate about it. I do not mean, that many Scripture Texts may not be ſpeciouſly urged on the other ſide: But what I mean, is, that upon the ſumming up of the Evidence on both ſides, and after ballancing the whole account, the Advantage is ſo plainly ours, according to all the approved Rules of Grammar or Criticiſm, that there is nothing at all left on the other ſide, whereby to turn the Scale, except it be ſome pretended *Abſurdity*, or Abſurdities, in Point of *Reaſon*, charged upon us, by the help of *dialectical* or *metaphyſical* Subtleties; which yet, after all, are meer Fallacy and Sophiſtry, and have no real Strength in them. We muſt therefore inſiſt upon it as certain Fact, that our Doctrine is *clear* enough, with reſpect to the Scripture-Evidences produced for it. *Scripture* in its plain, natural, obvious, unforced Meaning, ſays it; and *Reaſon* does not gainſay it: Upon theſe two Pillars our Cauſe reſts. Upon this Bottom Biſhop *Bull* fixes it: "The Antitri-"nitarians can never produce a *demonſtrative* "Reaſon to prove that it *cannot be*, and di-"vine Revelation aſſures us, that ſo it is [a].

CHAP. I.

[a] *Bull.* Poſth.-Works, Vol. iii. 833.

To

CHAP. I. To the ſame Purpoſe ſpeaks Mr. *Howe*: "That "there is a Trinity in the Godhead, of "Father, Son (or Word) and Holy Ghoſt, is "the plain obvious Senſe of ſo many Scrip- "tures, that it apparently tends to fruſtrate "the Deſign of the whole Scripture Revela- "tion, and to make it uſeleſs, not to admit "this Trinity, or otherwiſe to underſtand ſuch "Scriptures [a]. In like manner Dr. *Burnet* of the *Charterhouſe*, a noted Man, and known to have had as little of a *Bigot* in him, as any one, ſays thus: "We are obliged, according to that "Light which God hath vouchſafed to us, in "the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, to believe "and profeſs that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* is the "*Meſſiah*, and likewiſe *God*. If we miſtake "in this Faith, the Miſtake is ſo far from "being voluntary, that it is *inevitable*. For "we follow, according to the beſt of our "Apprehenſion, the Guides which God hath "given us, St. *John*, and *Paul* the Apoſtle. "To theſe ſacred Writers, we aſſent and ad- "here, interpreting them according to the "*genuine Force* and *received Uſe* of Words: "For neither Chriſt, nor the aboveſaid Writ- "ers have told us, that thoſe ſacred Oracles "were written in any other Style, or that they "were to be interpreted in any other manner [b].

[a] *Howe*'s Calm Diſcourſe of the Trinity in the God-head, *p.* 136, 137.

[b] Judgment of Dr. *Thomas Burnet*, *p.* 11, 12. Printed for *Roberts*, 1732.
See the Original, *de Fid. & Offic.* c. viii. p. 134.
And compare my viiith Sermon, *p.* 276, 277, 278, 279.

The

The late learned Profeſſor *Franck*, of *Hall* in *Saxony*, ſpeaking to the *Antitrinitarians*, expreſſes himſelf thus, "Tho' you allow the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, you nevertheleſs boldly and arrogantly contradict the Truth, *clearly* ſhining before your Eyes, and expreſs Teſtimonies propoſed in ſuch ſimple and plain Words, that even a *Child* may read and underſtand them[a]. CHAP. I.

I cite theſe Teſtimonies, not in the way of *Authority*, but only to give the Reader a clearer Idea of what the *Trinitarians* go upon: For, they are all, ſo far, in the ſame ſtrain, and theſe Teſtimonies are offered only as Samples, whereby to judge of the reſt. Any indifferent Stander-by may eaſily perceive, what, for the moſt part, has led the Chriſtian World to contend earneſtly for the Doctrine of the Trinity; namely, a conſcientious Dread of diſhonouring him whom God the Father has commanded them to honour even as himſelf, a profound Reverence for ſacred Writ, and an invincible Perſuaſion that thoſe Scriptures cannot, without the utmoſt *Violence*, and moſt daring *Preſumption*, be interpreted otherwiſe than they interpret them. It would be tedious here to cite the particular Texts which we ground our Faith upon; and it would be highly improper, to fetch-in the whole Diſpute about the *Truth* of the Doctrine, into this other Debate, which concerns only

[a] *Franck*'s Chriſtus ſacræ Scripturæ nucleus, *p.* 181, 182. Tranſlated out of *German*; printed by *Downing*, 1732.

the

CHAP. I. the *Importance* of it. Therefore referring the Readers for the *Truth* of the Doctrine to other Treatiſes lately printed, in great Abundance, and well known, I ſhall content my ſelf here with hinting two *general* Arguments or Conſiderations, ſuch as may give the Readers ſome Notion of the irreſiſtible Force of our Scripture Proofs in this Cauſe.

1. One is, that the Proofs which we inſiſt upon, cannot be evaded by any approved Rules of Language or Criticiſm, but the laſt Reſort of our Oppoſers commonly is to ſome *philoſophical* Principle, ſome pretended Reaſon, drawn from the ſuppoſed Nature of the thing, rather than from the Scripture Style, or from the Force of Scripture Expreſſions. I have obſerved elſewhere [a], that ſuch has been the Method of eluding *John* i. 1. and ſeveral other Texts, which are full and expreſs as poſſible, for the real and proper *Divinity* of our Lord. They are eluded, I ſay, upon this Principle, that *Perſon* and *intelligent Being* are equivalent and reciprocal; or that there can be *no Medium between Tritheiſm and Sabellianiſm*, or by ſomething elſe of like kind: which is running off from the Queſtion about the *Scriptural-Proof* of the Doctrine, to the *natural Poſſibility* of the Thing; and is not ſubmitting to the obvious and apparent Senſe of *ſacred Writ*, but is tantamount to ſaying, that no Scriptures can prove it: An Evaſion which

[a] Defence, Q. xxii. p. 327. Edit. 4.
Second Defence, Q. xxii. p. 438. 2d Edit.

might

might equally ſerve for any Texts whatever, were they ever ſo numerous, plain, and expreſs. This kind of Conduct on the oppoſite ſide, manifeſtly ſhews how hard they are preſſed upon the Foot of *Scripture*; when, in the laſt Reſult, they remove the Cauſe from *Scripture* to *Philoſophy*, from Conſiderations of *Language* and *Style* and *Propriety* of Expreſſion, to a foreign Conſideration, the *rationale* of the Thing. This is a plain Token that the *Letter* is againſt them; only, they take the *Reaſon* of the *Thing* to plead ſo much in their Favour, that it ought to over-rule any Force of Expreſſion. So, they lay the main Streſs upon *metaphyſical* Subtleties[a], that is to ſay, upon *human* Conjectures about Things naturally *unſearchable*, in oppoſition to the expreſs Declarations of the Word of God: Which, by the way, is firſt ſetting up a *falſe Meaſure* of Truth; and, next, is making a *new Rule* of Faith. It is a falſe Meaſure of Truth, to make *human Conception* the Standard of it, ſince there may be a thouſand, or ten thouſand Verities, which we cannot account for, or explain the *Manner* of: And it is making a *new Rule* of Faith, if we reſolve to believe nothing, but what we can *comprehend*; or if in caſes where we can ſee no plain *Contradiction* or *Abſurdity*, we chuſe to make the *Letter* of Scripture bend to our own Conceptions, rather than ſubmit our Wiſdom to the Wiſdom of God. But this is not

CHAP. I.

[a] See my *Firſt Defence*, p. 328, &c. 480. *Second Defence*, p. 4. 68. 113. 431. 438.

CHAP. I. the Point which I am now upon; and ſo it ſuffices to have briefly hinted it, in paſſing. The Uſe which I intended of the Obſervation in this Place, was to intimate the *Strength* of our *Scripture-Proofs*, which drive the Adverſaries to ſuch Extremities.

2. Another yet more affecting and ſenſible Argument of the ſame Thing, is, that our Antagoniſts, in eluding the *Scripture-proofs* of the Divinity of *God the Son*, have ſcarce left themſelves any for the Divinity even of *God the Father*; indeed none but what by the ſame artificial way of eluding, may be evaded and fruſtrated, as well as the other. This is a Conſideration of great Weight, which has been preſs'd upon them over and over[a], and has never yet received a ſatisfactory Anſwer. So it remains as a ſtanding Evidence of the glaring Force of our Scripture-proofs, and will ever remain ſo.

Upon the whole then, the Doctrine of the Trinity muſt be acknowledged *clear* enough with reſpect to the Scripture-proofs upon which it ſtands; provided always, that there is no-nothing plainly *repugnant* or *contradictory* in the Notion. For, on the other hand, it muſt be allowed, that were the Thing plainly *abſurd* or *impoſſible*, no Scriptures could prove it; but, in ſuch a caſe, we ſhould be obliged either to deny the Authority of ſuch Scriptures (in whole,

[a] Defence, p. 116.
Second Defence, p. 245. alias 250, &c.
Third Defence, p. 60, &c.
Compare *Abbadie* on Chriſt's Divinity, p. 240.

or in part) or to have recourſe to *Trope* or *Figure*, or any *poſſible* Interpretation to ſolve the Difficulty. This is not the Caſe here: And therefore ſince the Doctrine cannot be prov'd to be *impoſſible* in the Nature of the Thing, it is abundantly proved from Scripture to be both *poſſible* and *true*. Reaſon never has, never can demonſtrate the Thing to be impoſſible: After repeated Trials, 1400 Years upwards and more, and all to no purpoſe, That ſhould now be looked upon as a ruled Point *. I conclude then from what has been offered in this *Chapter*, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is *clear* enough to be *important*, both with reſpect to the *Matter* of it, and the *Scripture-proofs* upon which it ſtands: And therefore its pretended *Obſcurity*, or *Uncertainty* can be no ſufficient Reaſon for throwing it off as a ſlight or indifferent Article, not worth contending for, or inſiſting upon as an *Eſſential* of Faith, and a Term of Chriſtian *Communion*.

CHAP. II.

Shewing, that the ſame Doctrine is no Speculative *or* notional *Thing, but ſtrictly* practical, *and cloſely interwoven with the Principles of the* Chriſtian Life.

A *right* Knowledge of God, and a *Practice* conformable to it, and Both in order to

* See the State of the Queſtion, as to the *Poſſibility* of the Doctrine, in *Second Defence*, p. 529. and in Mr. *Browne's* Animadverſions on two Pieces, p. 5, 6, &c.

CHAP. II. a more compleat and bliſsful *Enjoyment*, are not *ſpeculative* or *indifferent* Matters, but Matters properly practical and of infinite Concernment. If *religious* Practice in any meaſure depends upon a previous *Knowledge* of *God* (as undoubtedly it does) then certainly, for the like Reaſon, the *Perfection* of that Practice depends upon the Perfection of ſuch Knowledge. A general and confuſe Notion of God may produce as general and confuſe Rules of Demeanour towards him; while a more particular and explicite Apprehenſion of the Deity, will of courſe produce a more particular and explicite Service. It is true, where God has not afforded ſuch diſtinct Knowledge, a leſs perfect Service may and muſt ſuffice: But wherever much is given, much will be required, and from peculiar Circumſtances will ariſe peculiar Obligations. If God be *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*, the Duties owing to God, will be Duties owing under that trine Diſtinction; which muſt be paid accordingly: And whoever leaves out any of the three out of his Idea of God, comes ſo far ſhort of honouring God *perfectly*, and of ſerving him in Proportion to the Manifeſtations made of him. Suppoſing our Doctrine *true* (as we are now to ſuppoſe) there will be Duties proper to be paid to the Father as Father, and to the Son as Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt as the eternal Spirit of Both; Duties correſpondent to their diſtinct Offices and Perſonalities, beſide the Duties common to all Three, conſidered as one God. In ſhort, the

the Specification of our *Worſhip*, and the right Direction of it, are nearly concern'd in this Doctrine: And therefore, if *Worſhip* be a *practical* Matter, this Doctrine alſo is *practical*, and not a Point of mere Speculation [a]. That Worſhip is a *practical* thing, I ſuppoſe, no Man of Senſe will diſpute; or if any one does, it muſt be a Diſpute only about *Words*, and not affecting the main thing: Wherefore, it muſt be altogether wrong to imagine, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is purely *notional*, or has no Connexion with *Practice* [b]. If the Doctrine be *true*, it is Sacrilege, and great Impiety in every Chriſtian to refuſe to worſhip Father, Son or Holy Ghoſt: But if the Doctrine be *falſe*, it is *Polytheiſm* and Idolatry to to pay religious Worſhip to any Perſon but the *Father* only. So much depends upon this ſingle Article. CHAP. II.

The Author of *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition* labours this Point extremely, for ſeveral Pages together [c], and has perhaps ſaid as much

[a] See Dr. *Webſter*'s introductory Diſcourſes to *Maimburg*'s Hiſtory of *Arianiſm*, p. 43, *&c.*

[b] Nihil falſius eſt ea *Remonſtrantium* Calumnia, qua articulum de S. S. Trinitate ullum ad *Praxin* uſum habere inficiantur. Omnis Doctrina veritatis, *ſecundum pietatem eſt.* Tit. 1. 1. Et hæc tam notabilis, tam fundamentalis, non eſſet? Imo totius Fidei, totius veræ Religionis ſcaturigo eſt. ——Nulla etiam Religio eſt, niſi quis verum Deum colat: non colit verum Deum, ſed cerebri ſui Figmentum, qui non adorat in æquali divinitatis majeſtate, Patrem, Filium, & Spiritum Sanctum. I nunc, & doctrinam eam ad *Praxin* inutilem eſſe clama, ſine qua nulla *Fidei* aut *Pietatis* Chriſtianæ *Praxis* eſſe poteſt. *Witſius in Symb. Apoſt.* p. 76.

[c] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 4.——23.

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and as well as the Cause will admit of. He endeavours to clear the *Arian* Worshippers of Christ from formal *Polytheism*; and to retort the Charge upon the *Orthodox* Worshippers; that so upon Consideration that both Parties may *mean well*, or in some respects may both *offend*, they may consent to bear with each other, and to unite in Christian Fellowship together. But, in my humble Opinion, the Thought is wide, and the Project impracticable. There is no patching up any lasting or rational Agreement of that kind, while the Parties cannot unite so much as in the Object of *divine* Worship. He allows, that the Oppofers of Christ's *Divinity* (properly so called) can pay him no more than *inferior* Worship, such as if tendered to *God*, would manifestly *dishonour* and *degrade* him, would directly *deny him to have* divine *Perfections*, and *in stead of honouring him as God, would degrade him into somewhat that is not God*[*]. Can Those then who believe Christ to be *God*, and who honour him as such, ever think it *reasonable* or *pious*, to hold Communion with Men, who, by what they call *inferior* Worship, do thus *manifestly dishonour and degrade* their God and Saviour, denying his *divine* Perfections, *degrading* him into somewhat that is *not God*? Can the Catholick Believers ever suffer, or connive at such Affronts offered (as they must esteem them) to *God blessed for ever*? How

[*] Sober and charitable Disquisition, p. 8. 9.

can

can they ever juſtify either to God, or to the World, or to their own Conſciences, ſuch a guilty *Neutrality* in an Affair of the higheſt Conſequence, in an Article of the laſt Importance? Mutual forbearance in doubtful Points of ſpeculative Opinion, is very becoming fallible Men, in Conſideration of our common Frailty; but it is unreaſonable, and morally impracticable, to come to any Compoſition, where the Parties differ ſo widely, and in ſo material a Concern, as the Object of divine *Worſhip*. Religious Men will be zealous for the Honour of their *Lord God*, becauſe they know, that they ought to be ſo; neither will they, nor can they countenance any *Coldneſs* or *Indifference* in ſo weighty a Concern. *Exceſſive* Heats perhaps may ſometimes ariſe in ſuch Caſes; for ſo long as Religion is held in Eſteem, and believed to be *worth* the contending for, there muſt be Conteſts about it, which may ſometimes riſe too high: But it is an Error on the right Hand, and much to be preferred to a cold *Indifference*; as a ſtrong athletick Conſtitution, tho' ſubject ſometimes to Fevers, is yet vaſtly preferable to a conſtant *Lethargy*. To return, the Sum is, that the Point of *divine* Worſhip, is a critical Point, a Difficulty which cannot be got over, while both ſides retain their reſpective Principles; one looking upon the *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt* as *Creatures*, and the other eſteeming them as *one God* with the Father. For ſuppoſing that both Parties were to join in the ſame ſolemn Acts of *outward*

CHAP. II. Worſhip offered to Chriſt (for that he ought to be *worſhipped* both Sides allow) yet ſince the Catholick Side conceive that thoſe *Religious* Acts are on the other Side defiled by an *irreligious* Meaning, and amount rather to a ſolemn Mockery of their God and Saviour, than to a reſpectful Remembrance of him; and that they are in *reality*, tho' not intentionally, flat *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry*; I ſay, while the Catholick Believers are ſo perſuaded, they cannot in Prudence or in Conſcience, in Piety to God or Charity to men, conſent to ſuch known Defilements of their ſolemn Service; becauſe it would be directly partaking in other Mens Sins. If it be ſaid, that they need not judge all *Creature-worſhip* to be *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry*; I anſwer, They cannot avoid it, while they conſider either *Scripture* itſelf, or the univerſal Suffrage of Antiquity in the beſt and pureſt Ages. If it be further ſaid, that they need not however think ſo hardly of *Creature-Worſhippers*, as to charge them with *Guilt*, ſince they may intend well; I anſwer, that a *good Intention* is not ſufficient to warrant an *ill thing*: Beſides that, were they ever ſo *guiltleſs*, yet thoſe of the contrary Perſuaſion could not be ſo in countenancing by their own Communion, what they cannot but look upon as great *Impiety* and *Profanation*. So, turn we this Matter which way we will, the Point of *Worſhip* muſt be a parting Point betwixt them, while they retain their oppoſite Sentiments, with regard to the ſtrict and proper *Divinity* of Chriſt.

I ſhall not here enter into the Debate about *Creature-worſhip*, having diſtinctly and fully conſidered it elſewhere[a]: Beſides, that I may properly wave it, as it is wide and foreign to the Cauſe now in hand. For whether ſuch *Creature-worſhip* be *right* or *wrong*, thoſe that believe in Chriſt as a *divine* Perſon, cannot join with thoſe who worſhip him under the Notion of a *Creature*, and do not worſhip him as *divine*; becauſe, it has been before intimated ſuch inferior Worſhip, (whatever elſe we call it) is *diſhonouring* and *degrading* him, and cannot but be rejected with Abhorrence by all that ſeriouſly believe him to be really and ſtrictly God. CHAP. II.

As to what the Author of *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition* objects, That poſſibly ſome of our own People, who believe Chriſt to be *God*, may yet conſider him merely as *Man*, or as *Mediator*[b], and not as *God*, in their Acts of Worſhip, it may be purely a Surmiſe: But however the Fact ſtands, there is no Argument in it. We cannot anſwer for *vulgar* Chriſtians, as to the Notions they may poſſibly

[a] Defence, Q. xvi. p. 229, *&c.*
Second Defence, Q. xvi. p. 374, *&c.*
Compare *Bull's primitiva & Apoſtol. Traditio.* c. vi. p. 386, *&c.*
Biſhop *Smalbroke's* Idolatry charged on *Arianiſm.*
Mr. *Abr. Taylor's* true Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 69, 448, *&c.*
Dr. *Biſhop's* Sermons, p. 271—281.
Archbiſhop *Tillotſon's* Sermons, Vol. I. p. 547, *&c.* Fol. Edit.

[b] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition. p. 21, 22, 23.

entertain

entertain even of *God* the *Father* in their Worſhip of him; neither can we be certain, whether ſometimes they riſe higher than thoſe of an *Anthropomorphite*. But I preſume if any *vulgar* Chriſtians ignorantly or innocently miſtake, they are very willing to be ſet right by their more knowing Guides, or by other ſenſible Friends: Which makes their Caſe widely different from that of thoſe who take upon them to juſtify *Creature Worſhip* upon Principle, and who ſeparate Chriſt from the *one Godhead* in the worſhip of him, knowingly, and out of ſet Purpoſe and Deſign. We are not *involved in Guilt*, merely by communicating with Perſons, whoſe Errors (tho' perhaps *great*) we know nothing of, or who probably would correct them upon better Inſtruction, or the firſt gentle Admonition. *Guilt* is contracted by communicating with thoſe who openly and reſolutely corrupt the Faith (knowingly or ignorantly) in very important Articles. To join with ſuch Perſons, is partaking in their *Impiety*: it is not *Charity*, but *Men-pleaſing*, and betraying a Diſregard for the *Honour* of *God*. But this general Queſtion will come over again, and will be more fully debated in a proper place.

Enough has been ſaid to ſhew, that *Chriſtian Worſhip* is very nearly concerned in the Queſtion about the Trinity; and therefore the Doctrine is ſtrictly *practical*, and has a cloſe Connexion with the *Chriſtian* Life. I declined entring into the main Debate about *Creature Worſhip*,

for

for the Reasons above hinted. Yet because the Author of *Sober and charitable Disquisition*, has advanced some things upon that Article, which every Reader may not know how to answer, I shall suggest a few Considerations here by the way, to serve as Hints or Heads of Solution, to the Difficulties objected. 1. If that Gentleman means to say, that the outward Acts of *civil* Homage, and *religious* Worship are so equivocal and ambiguous, that there is no way left to distinguish them, it is disputing against *Fact*, and amounts to telling us, that no one can distinguish in a Case where no one can easily mistake, or ever has been mistaken. *Civil* Homage is distinguishable from *religious* Worship, by the *Circumstances*[a] always, and often by the *Nature* of the *Acts* themselves. That *burning Incense* to *Daniel*[b] was merely *civil* Respect, will not be easily proved: Neither will the Example of an *idolatrous* King, who would have done as much to an Image, be sufficient to *justify* it; tho' the Author speaks of it[c], as if both these Points were indisputable. 2. Those outward Acts, so and so circumstantiated, as to become *religious* Worship, are what God has *appropriated* to the *Jehovah*, to the *true God*, in the holy Scriptures of the old Testament, as *exterior* and *visible* Acknowledgements of the *divine* Sovereignty over all

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[a] See *Stillingfleet*'s Defence of the Discourse concerning Idolatry in *Works*, Vol. v. p. 344, 357.

[b] Dan. ii. 46.

[c] Sober and charitable Disquisition, p. 6.

Creatures,

CHAP. II. Creatures, and of the *Dependence* which Creatures have upon their Creator: For, the *Reaſons* which God inſiſts upon, why he, and he only is to be *worſhipped*, are ſuch as exclude all *creatures* whatever, *viz.* his being *Jehovah*, Creator, Suſtainer, Preſerver of all things [a]. 3. To pay theſe *exterior* Services, once ſo *appropriated* to God, to any *Creature*, is *idolizing* the Creature, or *deifying* the Creature, and is both *Idolatry* and *Polytheiſm*. 4. Therefore the paying ſuch *exterior* religious Services to Chriſt, conſidered as a *Creature*, muſt, according to the whole Tenor of the old Teſtament, be plain Idolatry and *Polytheiſm*. 5. The ſame Rule for religious Worſhip, obtains under the New Teſtament, as before under the Old: which appears, as from ſeveral other places, ſo particularly from our Lord's Anſwer to *Satan* [b], and from the Angel's Admonitions to St. *John* in the *Revelations* [c].

The Author of *ſober and charitable*, &c. aſks, Why the paying Worſhip to an inviſible Being, muſt imply its having *divine* Perfections, and therefore muſt be *divine* Worſhip [d]? The Reaſon is, becauſe God has *appropriated* all ſuch Addreſſes, ſo and ſo circumſtantiated, to the one Lord *Jehovah*; thereby making them (if they were not in their own nature

[a] Iſai. xl. Iſai. xlv. 5, 6, 7. 2 Kings xix. 15. Jer. x. 10, 11, 12. Compare my Sermons, p. 18, 19.

[b] Mat. iv. 10.

[c] Revel. xix. 10. xxii. 9. *See* thoſe Texts fully explain'd in Biſhop *Bull's Primitiva & Apoſtolica Traditio*, C. vi. p. 388.

[d] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 8.

before

before) a virtual Recognition of *divine* Perfections[a]; and therefore they interpretatively amount to *divine* Worſhip. He adds, That *this is proving the Point, by taking it for granted, that none but God is to be worſhipped.* No, but it is proving the Point in the beſt manner, and by the ſtrongeſt Evidences, namely, expreſs Scripture Evidences, all the way from *Geneſis* down to the *Revelations*, of ſuch *Appropriation* as hath been mentioned. In ſhort then, God has ſo appropriated religious Worſhip, as to exclude all *Creatures* from any Share in it: Therefore all religious Worſhip is *divine* Worſhip; and therefore to worſhip Chriſt, under the Notion of a *Creature*, is Idolatry and *Polytheiſm*. So ſtands this matter, which I have but briefly hinted, to take off this Author's Exceptions; referring the Reader, as above, to other Treatiſes, where the Subject is conſidered at large. Now I return to the Point I was upon, the *practical* Nature of the Doctrine of the Trinity. CHAP. II.

Beſides the Influence which this Doctrine has upon *Worſhip*, it may be conſidered farther in a more general View, as tending to form within our Minds *Diſpoſitions* proper for ſuch State and Circumſtances as we are to expect hereafter. It is an allowed Truth, that the good Diſpoſitions which Men contract in this Life, are their Qualifications for the Happineſs of the Life to come; and that the more refin-

[a] *See* Preface to my Sermons, p. xlvii.

ed

CHAP. II. ed and raiſed ſuch their good Diſpoſitions are, the more fitly qualified they are for the higher Degrees of Bleſſedneſs in Heaven. Put the Caſe then, that the three Perſons of the Trinity are equally *divine*, and that a Man has been trained up to eſteem them accordingly, it cannot be doubted but that he goes out of the World more fitly diſpoſed, in that reſpect, to be taken into their Friendſhip, and beſt qualified (other Circumſtances being equal) for the beatifick Enjoyment. Conſequently, the Belief of the Doctrine of the Trinity (ſuppoſing it *true*) is no ſlight or inſignificant Theory, no barren Notion or Speculation; ſince it has a direct Influence upon the *Diſpoſitions* of our Minds here, and upon our *Happineſs* hereafter. I make not this an Argument of of the *Truth* of the Doctrine, (for that is not the Point I am now upon) but of the *Importance* of it, after admitting it for a ſacred Truth: And I add, that if it may have ſuch Influence upon us, in creating proper *Diſpoſitions*, that comes to the ſame as to ſay, that it raiſes and improves our *Virtues*, and all Virtue is *practical*.

A further Conſideration of like kind may be drawn from the Influence which the ſame Doctrine has upon the *Motives* to Chriſtian Practice. There are no two Motives more affecting or more endearing, or more apt to work upon ingenuous Minds, than the *Love* of God the Father in ſending his beloved Son to redeem us, and the *Love* and *Condeſcenſion* of

of our bleſſed Lord, in ſubmitting to be ſo ſent. CHAP. II.
God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son [c], &c. *In this was manifeſted the Love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him* [d]. We ſee here what a Streſs and Emphaſis is laid, not merely upon this, that Life, eternal Life, is the Benefit beſtowed, but that it is conveyed in ſuch a *manner*, and by ſuch endearing *means*, by the *only begotten Son*. The *Socinians*, when preſſed upon this Article, do nothing but trifle and ſhuffle with us: They fall to magnifying the Love of God, in giving us ſo high, ſo inеſtimable a Bleſſing, as *Life eternal*. Very true; but does not Scripture, beſides that, lay a particular Emphaſis upon the *Means* made uſe of in conveying the Grant? And how is this Emphaſis made out upon their Hypotheſis, that Chriſt is a mere *Man*? But ſuppoſe him a *Creature*, and the very firſt and higheſt of all Creatures, before he came down from Heaven; yet neither does that Suppoſition ſufficiently anſwer the Purpoſe. For, conſidering how honourable the Service was, and how unconceivably vaſt and large the Reward for it, it might more properly be ſaid, that God *ſo loved his Son*, that he ſent him into the World, in order to *prefer* him to a kind of Rivalſhip with himſelf, to advance him to *divine* Honours, to make the *whole*

[c] John iii. 16. [d] 1 John iv. 9.

Creation

CHAP. II. *Creation* bow before him, and pay him Homage and Obeiſance [a]: And all this as the Reward of his Sufferings of a few Years; great indeed, but not apparently greater than many of his Diſciples ſuffered after him, nor *worthy to be compared with the Glory* [b] that ſhall accrue to every good Chriſtian, much leſs with that immenſe, that incredible Glory which was to accrue to him [c]. Now to me it ſeems, that the ſuppoſing Chriſt a mere *Creature*, is a Thought which mightily leſſens the Force of the Scripture Expreſſions repreſenting God's ſending his Son, as an Act of ſtupendous Love to Man, upon account of the Dignity of the *Perſon* by whom that Salvation was to be wrought: ſo that the denying the *Divinity* of Chriſt robbs us in part of one of the moſt endearing and affecting *Motives* to the Chriſtian Life. Wherefore in this View alſo, the Doctrine of the Trinity, if true, is both *important* and *practical*, as it raiſes the *Motives* upon which Chriſtian *Practice* is built. I do

[a] Phil. ii. 10. Rev. v. 11, 12, 13. vii. 10.

[b] Rom. viii. 18.

[c] Equidem rem attentius perpendenti liquebit, ex hypotheſi ſive *Sociniana*, ſive *Ariana*, Deum in hoc negotio amorem & dilectionem ſuam potius in *illum ipſum Filium*, quam erga *nos homines* oſtendiſſe. Quid enim? Is qui Chriſtus dicitur, ex merâ dei *ευδοκια* & beneplacito in eam gratiam electus eſt, ut poſt brevem hîc in terris Deo præſtitam obedientiam, ex puro puto homine juxta *Socinianos*, ſive ex mera & mutabili *creatura*, ut *Ario-manitæ* dicunt, *Deus* ipſe fieret, ac *divinos* honores, non modo a nobis *hominibus* ſed etiam ab ipſis *Angelis* atque *Archangelis* ſibi tribuendos aſſequeretur, adeoque in alias *Creaturas* omnes dominium atque imperium obtineret.

Bull. Judic. Eccl. Cathol. c. v. p. 313.

no

not ſay, there would be no Force in the Motive conſidered in an *Arian* View, and ſuppoſing Chriſt to have been a moſt excellent *Creature:* But the Force of it would be conſiderably leſs upon that Suppoſition; and therefore, if the Doctrine be a *Truth*, it is a Truth of ſome Moment in a View to *Practice*, as raiſing and inforcing the *Motives* beyond what the other Hypotheſis does.

So again, the *Love of Chriſt* towards Mankind, appears in a much clearer and ſtronger Light upon the *Trinitarian* Principles, than upon the *Antitrinitarian*. For if Chriſt was in the *Form* of *God*, *equal with God*, and *very God*, it was then an Act of Infinite Love and *Condeſcenſion* in him to become Man, and die for us: But if he was no more than a *Creature*, it was no ſurprizing Condeſcenſion to embark in a Work ſo glorious, ſuch as being the Saviour of Mankind, and ſuch as would advance him to be *Lord* and *Judge* of the World, to be admired, reverenced, and adored both by Men and Angels, God himſelf alſo glorifying him, and ſounding forth his Praiſes through the utmoſt Limits of the Univerſe. Where is the *Condeſcenſion* of a *Creature*'s ſubmitting to be thus highly honoured? or what *Creature* could there be, that could *modeſtly* aſpire to it, or might not think it much above his Pretenſions, or higheſt *Ambition*[a]? In ſhort,

[a] Addo, neque ipſius *Filii Dei* unigeniti *amorem* & charitatem, ergo nos homines (quæ etiam magnifice paſſim celebratur in

CHAP. II. " to become Man, to ſuffer and die for the " Redemption of the World, and to be made " the Lord and Judge both of the Quick and " of the Dead, can be an Act of *condeſcending* " Love and Goodneſs only in *God*. So that " to deny the *Divinity* of Chriſt, alters the " very Foundations of Chriſtianity, and de- " ſtroys all the powerful Arguments of the " Love, Humility, and Condeſcenſion of our " Lord, which are the peculiar Motives of the " Goſpel [b]. If either the Work of Redemption was too big for a *Creature* to engage in, or if the Honours attending it were too high for a *Creature* to aſpire after [c], then certainly the

in S. Scripturis, ac maxime in loco illo Epiſtolæ ad *Epheſ.* iii. 18, 19.) clarè elucere, niſi concipiamus Filium Dei qui ante ſæcula ex Patre genitus eſt, per quem omnia facta ſunt, qui propter nos homines, & propter noſtram ſalutem, deſcendit de cœlis & incarnatus eſt, &c. At vero hoc modo——Filii Dei *eminentiſſimè in ſigmentum ſuum dilectio*——, clariſſime conſpicitur.

Bull, Judic. Eccl. c. v. p. 311.

[b] *Sherlock*'s Vindication of the Defence of *Stillingfleet*, ch. v. p. 268.

[c] Οἰκονομία, quæ ipſi tribuitur, θεολογίαν neceſſario ſupponit, ipſamque omnino ſtatuit. Quid enim? Meſſiam ſive Chriſtum prædicant ſacræ noſtræ literæ & credere nos profitemur omnes, qui ſit *animarum ſoſpitator*, qui nobis ſit *ſapientia, juſtitia, ſanctificatio, & redemptio*——, qui preces ſuorum, ubivis ſacroſanctum ejus nomen invocantium, illico exaudiat——, qui Eccleſiæ ſuæ per univerſum terrarum orbem diſſeminatæ, ſemper præſto ſit——, qui Deo Patri, αὐθρόνος, & in eadem ſede collocatus ſit——. Qui denique, in exitu mundi, immenſa gloria & majeſtate refulgens, angelis miniſtris ſtipatus, veniet orbem judicaturus, non modo facta omnia, ſed & cordis ſecreta omnium quotquot fuere hominum in lucem proditurus, &c. Hæccine omnia in purum *hominem*, aut *creaturam* aliquam competere? Fidenter dico, qui ita ſentiat, non modo contra *Fidem*, ſed & *Rationem* ipſam inſanire.

Bull, Judic. Eccl. Cath. c. i. p. 291, 292.

very

very Notion of *Condeſcenſion* is ſunk and loſt, upon every Hypotheſis which does not make Chriſt truly and properly God, God eternal. I am very ſenſible, that while I am arguing for the *Importance* of the Doctrine, I may ſeem at the ſame time to be pleading for the *Truth* of it, and ſo to run unawares into the other Queſtion. But the two Queſtions are ſo nearly allied, that I know not ſometimes how to avoid it. The ſame Conſiderations generally which prove one, muſt of courſe obliquely glance at the other alſo: And every Scripture Argument, which intimates the *Uſe* and *Importance* of the Doctrine, muſt at leaſt tacitly ſuppoſe and inſinuate the *Truth* of it, and ſo in effect prove Both in one. If Scripture has laid down *Motives* which are not naturally or reaſonably accounted for, or underſtood, but upon the ſuppoſition of the Truth of ſuch a Doctrine, then both the Doctrine it ſelf, and the *practical* Nature of it, are at the ſame time inſinuated: Which I mention here once for all, to prevent Confuſion, and now proceed to what remains. CHAP. II.

The *Satisfaction* or *Propitiation*, for the Sins of the World, made by Chriſt, is of great Importance to the Chriſtian Life, and ſeems alſo to have a cloſe Connexion with the Doctrine of the Trinity. The *Truth* of the Satisfaction, and the *Neceſſity* there was for it, may be ſubſtantially proved *a poſteriori*, from Scripture it ſelf [a], independent of the Doctrine

[a] See a late rational and judicious Diſcourſe upon the Subject, intituled,

CHAP. II. of the Trinity. But after proceeding ſo far, it will be difficult to clear and extricate that Scripture Doctrine, without admitting this other alſo: Becauſe it is not reaſonable to think that any *Creature* could do more than was his bounden Duty to do upon God's requiring it; or that he could by any Services or Sufferings attain to ſuch a Degree of *Merit*, as ſhould atone for a World of Sinners; or that he ſhould be intruſted with ſuch an Office (ſuppoſing him otherwiſe *equal* to it) as would of courſe draw after it the Adoration and Homage both of Men and Angels. The Queſtion properly here, is not, whether any thing leſs than God could pay an *infinite* Satisfaction, but whether a *Creature* could pay *any*, or could *merit* at all. If it be ſaid, that God might *accept* it as he pleaſed, it may be ſaid likewiſe, upon the ſame Principle, that he might accept the *Blood* of *Bulls*, or of *Goats*. Yet the Apoſtle tells us, that *it is not poſſible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats ſhould take away Sins*[b]: which Words appear to reſolve the *Satisfaction* not merely into God's free Acceptance, but into the *intrinſick* Value of the Sacrifice. And while we reſt it upon that Foot, I do not ſee why we may not ſay, that it is not poſſible for the Blood of any *Creature* to take away the Sins of the World, ſince no *Creature* can do more than his Duty, nor can have any

intituled, *Jeſus Chriſt the Mediator between God and Man*, Printed for *J. Noon*, 1732.

[b] Hebr. x. 4.

Stock

Stock of *Merit* to ſpare for other Creatures. In this Light, the Scripture Doctrine of the *Satisfaction* infers the *Divinity* of him that made it: And hence it is, that thoſe who have denied our Lord's proper *Divinity*, have commonly gone on to deny any proper *Satisfaction* alſo; or while they have admitted it in *Words*, or in *Name* (as they admit alſo Chriſt's *Divinity*) they have denied the *Thing*. Scripture itſelf ſeems to reſolve the *Satisfaction* into the *Divinity* of the Perſon ſuffering. It was *Jehovah* that was pierced [a]. It was *God* that purchaſed the Church with *his own Blood* [b]: It was ὁ δεσπότης, the *high Lord* that bought us [c]: It was the *Lord of Glory* that was *crucified* [d]. And indeed it is unintelligible, how the Blood of a *Creature* ſhould make any proper Atonement or Expiation for Sin, as before intimated. This again is another of thoſe Arguments, or Conſiderations, which at once inſinuate both the *Truth* of our Doctrine, and the *Importance* of it. However, if Scripture otherwiſe teſtifies that Chriſt is properly *God*, and if the ſame Scriptures elſewhere, independently of our preſent Argument, declare that Chriſt has atoned for us; then from theſe two Propoſitions put together reſults this *Third*, that a *Divine* Perſon has ſatisfy'd for us: Conſequently, whoſoever deſtroys the *Di-*

CHAP. II.

[a] Zechar. xii. 10. compared with John xix. 37.
[b] Acts xx. 28. For the reading, conſult *Mills* in loc.
[c] 2 Pet. ii. 1. See *Taylor*'s true Scripture doctrine, p. 391, &c.
[d] 1 Cor. ii. 8.

CHAP. II. *vinity* of Chriſt, juſtly ſo called, does at the ſame time deſtroy the true Notion of the *Satisfaction* made by him. Hence it appears, at the loweſt, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* involves ſeveral other important Doctrines of Chriſtianity with it, and gives another kind of turn and ſignificancy to them, than what they would have without it: And therefore, moſt undoubtedly, it is no barren *Speculation*, no *indifferent* or ſlight Matter, but a Doctrine of the Foundation, nearly affecting the very *Vitals* of Chriſtianity, and the Chriſtian Life.

The Author of *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition*, has ſpent ſeveral Pages [a], to invalidate the Argument drawn from the common Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*; And ſo I muſt ſtop for a while to examine what he ſays. He thinks it cannot be proved, that *none but God could make ſuch Satisfaction* [b]. But I conceive, it may be proved from the *Nature of the Thing*, that no *Creature* could *merit*; and from *Scripture*, that he who made the Satisfaction is *God*, is *Jehovah:* And theſe two Conſiderations taken together, do amount to what we pretend to. He himſelf allows, the *Truth* of our Doctrine once proved, as to God's being ſacrificed, the *Conſequence* to be indiſputable, that it *was ſome way or other neceſſary* [c]. This indeed is not the *whole* of what we are able to prove, as may appear from what hath been

[a] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 24—35.
[b] Ibid. p. 24. [c] Ibid. 25.

ſaid:

ſaid: But even this is ſufficient to our preſent Purpoſe; namely, that if our Doctrine is *true*, it muſt be *important*, becauſe of the other important Doctrines which hang upon it. Therefore the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is no *ſpeculative* Opinion of ſlight Value or Significancy. If it be true, it is worth contending for, and *earneſtly* too. CHAP. II.

He aſks, whether we are ſure, *that no Being inferior to God could make full amends to divine Juſtice*[a]? We conceive, with very good reaſon, that no *Creature* could *merit* with God, or do Works of *Supererogation*. I paſs over what he obſerves about *infinite* Satisfaction[b], not affecting the Queſtion as here by me ſtated. He aſks, how we can be ſure, that God *cannot accept of the Sacrifice of the beſt and moſt excellent of created Beings*? I ſay not, what God *can*, or *cannot accept*: I know nothing *a priori* about it. But Scripture, as before obſerved, reſts not this Matter upon the Foot of divine *Acceptance*, but upon the *intrinſick* Value of the Sacrifice: And when we conſider the thing in that View, we ſay, that a *Creature*'s Services or Sufferings carry no proper Intrinſick *merit* in them. And we add further, that God *has accepted* no Sacrifice leſs than a *divine* Sacrifice, becauſe we prove from other Topicks, that Chriſt our Paſſover was ſtrictly *God*, and he was *ſacrificed* for us. In ſhort,

[a] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 25.
[b] Ibid. p. 25, 26, 27.

CHAP. II. the Queſtion is not what God might have *accepted*, if he had ſo pleaſed, but whether, when he has choſen the way of *Expiation*, and the Scriptures lay a particular Streſs and Emphaſis upon it, as carrying *intrinſick Merit* in it, both real and great, whether this can be juſtly accounted for, on the Suppoſition that our Lord was no more than a *Creature*[a].

The Author goes on to raiſe Difficulties, and to advance divers Subtilties to perplex the Notion of a *compound* Perſon: Moſt of them, I conceive, run beyond the Mark, and might as ſoon prove that *Soul* and *Body* make not *one Perſon* or Man, as that God and Man make not the *one Perſon* of Chriſt. For Example; he pleads that a Perſon compounded of God and Man, *muſt be inferior in Dignity to a Perſon wholly and only divine*[b]. By the ſame Argument, a Man being partly *Spirit* and partly *Body*, is inferior in Dignity to the ſeparate Soul, which is *wholly and only Spirit*: And if there be any Force in the Argument, I know not how far it may affect the Doctrine of a *future Reſurrection*. Now, we ſay, that the divine Nature loſes nothing of its Digni-

[a] Verbo dicam: nulli *creaturæ*, licet excellentiſſima ea ſit, excellentiſſimoque modo operetur, illud competat, ut vitæ æternæ præmium ei ex *ſtricto jure* debeatur. Præterquam enim quod bonum æternæ vitæ ſit abſolutiſſimum, immenſum, infinitum, atque adeo *omnia omnium creaturarum* opera *infinitis* gradibus tranſcendens; illud etiam Apoſtoli, ἐμοὶ τὸ ζῆν tale eſt, ut ei a nemine reſponderi poſſit: τίς προέδωκεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἀνταποδοθήσεται αὐτῷ; Rom. xi. 35,

Bull Harmon. Apoſtol. Diſſert. ii. c. 12. p. 490.

[b] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 29.

ty

ty by aſſuming the *human*; but retains all the Dignity it before had; and therefore the whole Perſon becomes not *inferior*. He further pleads, that *it is not God that dies, but God-man*. Allow'd: But ſtill That Perſon, That Chriſt, who is *God*, dies: As when a Man dies, that Perſon (who is *Soul*, as well as Body) dies. We never ſuppoſe that the *Godhead* dies, any more than we imagine that the *Soul* dies. He ſays further, That *the Perſon which makes the Satisfaction, is not a divine Perſon*[1]. How ſo, when the Perſon is both *God* and *Man*, (as he had before allowed) in our Scheme? Do we make *two* Perſons? He argues next againſt the *Humanity* becoming part of the *Perſon* of Chriſt. *Nothing can really be this* who, *but muſt be the* what *this* who *is, at the ſame time*. He might as juſtly argue, that *Peter*'s Body cannot be part of *Peter*, or of the *Perſon* of *Peter*, together with his Soul; becauſe nothing can really be this *who* (*Peter*'s Soul) but muſt be *what* this *who* is, at the ſame time. Now taking for granted that *Peter*'s *Soul* is the *whole* Perſon, the Argument is good: And ſo it is likewiſe in the other Caſe, taking it for granted, that the *Logos* in unior, is ſtill the *whole* Perſon; but this is going upon falſe Suppoſitions: And he might as ſoon prove that *Peter*'s Body cannot be part of *Peter*, unleſs it be his *Soul*, as that Chriſt's *Humanity* cannot be part of Chriſt, unleſs it be the *Lo-*

CHAP. II.

[1] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 30.

gos.

CHAP. II. *gos.* I can hardly conjecture what the Author means, when he ſays, *That human Subſtance we call* John, *is really the Perſon, and nothing elſe*[a]. I thought, that *John*, or *John*'s Perſon, was made up of *two* Subſtances, *ſpiritual* and *bodily:* And *John*, the Perſon of *John*, dies, tho' one Subſtance ſurvives. In like manner, Chriſt the *God-man* dies, tho' the *Godhead* dies not. He adds, much like to what he had ſaid before, that the *human Nature can never be really* he, *unleſs he be alſo the divine Nature.* Does he mean by *he*, part of the Perſon, or the whole Perſon? If he means *part*, then it amounts to this; the *Body* can never be really a part of *Peter*'s Perſon, unleſs it be *Peter*'s *Soul:* or if he means the *whole*, then it comes to this, that the Body can never be the *whole Perſon*, unleſs it be the *Soul.* One of the Propoſitions is manifeſtly againſt *Truth*, and the other is not *Senſe:* So little can be effected in this way of reaſoning. Indeed, all the Confuſion ariſes from the want of knowing or conſidering what the true Notion of a *Perſon*, ſimple or compound, is, of which I have elſewhere treated at large[b], and thither I take leave to refer the Reader. In the mean while, I cannot but heartily lament and grieve, to find that ſerious and ſenſible Men can give their Minds to oppoſe a ſcriptural and venerable Doctrine, which has ſtood the Teſt of Ages, by ſuch fine ſpun Subtilties: *Zeno*'s Arguments

[a] Sober and charitable Diſq. p. 31.
[b] Second Defence, Q. xv. p. 365——369.

againſt

againſt *Motion*, might appear weighty in Com- CHAP. II.
pariſon.

But we have more of the ſame kind ſtill, which I ſhall reply to very briefly. *The dying Humanity can have no ſuch Dignity*[a]. True, but the dying *Chriſt* might, and that ſuffices. *The human Nature ſhould really and truly be that divine Perſon.* No: *Part* of the Perſon is ſufficient: The *human* Nature conſtitutes one compound Perſon with the *divine* Nature. *The Logos could not really be Man.* Why? Was not the Word made Fleſh? that is, the Word became incarnate, aſſumed Humanity. *Humanity could not be aſſumed into a real Communion of his Perſon, without being aſſumed into what that Perſon is*[b]. He muſt mean, I preſume, without being converted into *Godhead.* But why not, if *Bodies* at the general Reſurrection may be aſſumed into a *perſonal* Union with *Souls*, without ceaſing to be *Bodies*, or being converted into *Spirits*? *For the ſame thing* (Perſon) *to be God and Man at once, that is, really and truly ſo, is ſurely as impoſſible as Tranſubſtantiation*[c]. And yet ſurely it is not more impoſſible than for the ſame *human Being* (call him *Peter* or *John*) to be both *Soul* and *Body* at once, *really* and *truly* ſo; which a Man may firmly believe as a certain Truth, without admitting *Tranſubſtantiation*, a palpable Abſurdity. *That Man ſhould really and ſtrictly ſpeaking, be a divine Perſon, or a*

[a] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 32. [b] Ibid. p. 33.
[c] Ibid. p. 34.

divine

CHAP. II. *divine Perſon Man, to me ſeems utterly impoſſible*[a]. If he means, that the divine Nature is not the human, nor the human divine, he ſays right, and has no Oppoſer: But if he means, that *divine* Subſtance and *human* Subſtance together, may not make *one Perſon*, or *one Chriſt*, let him ſhow why it is more impoſſible than for a *Spiritual* Subſtance and a *corporeal* Subſtance to make *one Perſon*, or *one Man*. He adds, or repeats, that *the death of the Man is not the death of God*[b]. But it is the death of *Chriſt*, who is God and Man. So the death of the *Body* is not the death of the *Soul*; but it is the death of the *Man*, who is both Soul and Body. Such is the Nature of a *perſonal* Union, and ſuch the manner of ſpeaking of it; and it is ſo obvious and common a Caſe, that none but *Philoſophers* would miſtake it.

The Author cloſes his Diſcourſe on this head, with obſerving, that our Oppoſers may carry the Point of *Satisfaction* as high as we do, and account as handſomely for it. As how? By *ſuppoſing the Logos to be in as cloſe an Union with God*, as we ſuppoſe *Chriſt's Humanity* to be with the *Logos*[c]. Well then, it muſt be a *perſonal* Union, ſo as to make the *Father* and the *Logos* one Perſon. How then? Then *the ſufferings of the Logos will be as much the ſufferings of God, and as much an Atonement for Sin, as the death of Chriſt's human*

[a] Sober and charitable Diſq. p. 34. [b] Ibid p. 34. [c] Ibid. p. 35.

Nature

Nature in the other *Scheme* [a]. True: But then the Sufferings of the *Logos* will be the Sufferings of the *Father* (which is the ancient Hereſy of the *Patri-paſſians*) and the ſame *Perſon*, both pays and accepts the Ranſom, makes an Atonement to *himſelf*; which is not conſonant to *Scripture*, nor to common Senſe.

The Author concludes his Account of this Matter, with this Inference, that the Men whom he has been pleading for, *do not ſeem ſo deeply culpable, nor ſo dangerouſly miſtaken* [b], as is commonly repreſented. To me it appears quite the contrary; and from this very Repreſentation of his, whereby he intended to favour them. They are deeply culpable, 1. For making God the Son a *Creature*, againſt the whole tenor of Scripture. 2. For running into *Patri-paſſianiſm*, to help out *Arianiſm*; heaping Error upon Error, Hereſy upon Hereſy. 3. For doing it, upon the ſtrength only of a few dialectical, or metaphyſical *Subtilties*, ſcarce worthy to be offered, or ſo much as named, in ſo momentous a Cauſe as this is. 4. For making uſe of ſuch Topicks againſt the perſonal Union of *God* and *Man*, as might with equal Force be urged againſt the perſonal Union of any *two Subſtances* whatever, and prove (if they prove any thing) that an human Perſon is not made up of *Soul* and *Body*. 5. For condemning their Oppoſers as void of *Charity*, only for their pious, faithful, and ex-

[a] Sober and charitable Diſq. p. 34, 35.
[b] Ibid p. 35. [c] Ibid.

CHAP. II. tremely *charitable* Endeavours to preſerve their Flocks from being led aſide after *Satan*, from imbibing Sentiments ſubverſive of the Goſpel of Chriſt. But I ſhall have more to ſay upon the head of *Charity* in another Chapter. I hope my Reader will excuſe my digreſſing thus far (if it may be called a Digreſſion) upon the Article of *Satisfaction*, to attend the *Author* who gave the Occaſion. Now I return.

I have been repreſenting the *practical* Nature and *important* Uſes of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, with reſpect to *Worſhip*, in which all the *three* Perſons are intereſted; and I have more particularly preſſed the *Importance* of the Doctrine of our Lord's *Divinity*, from *ſpecial* Conſiderations relating to the Goſpel *Motives*, and the Nature of the *Atonement* made for Sins. I ought not here to omit the like *ſpecial* Conſiderations concerning the *Holy Spirit*, and the Neceſſity of believing his *Divinity* likewiſe. I ſhall chuſe here to expreſs my ſelf in the excellent Words of a celebrated Writer, whom I have before quoted more than once. "Our Salvation by Chriſt does not only conſiſt "in the *Expiation* of our Sins, *&c.*—— but in "the *Communication of divine Grace* and Power "to renew and ſanctify us: And this is every "where in Scripture attributed to the *Holy* "*Spirit*, as his peculiar Office in the Oeco-"nomy of Man's Salvation. And it muſt make a "*fundamental Change* in the Doctrine of divine "*Grace* and Aſſiſtance, to deny the *Divinity* of

" the *Holy Spirit.* For, can a *Creature* be the *u-* CHAP. II.
" *niverſal* Spring and Fountain of divine Grace
" and Life? Can a finite *Creature* be a kind
" of *univerſal* Soul to the whole Chriſtian
" Church, and to every ſincere Member of it?
" Can a *Creature* make ſuch cloſe Application
" to our Minds, know our Thoughts, ſet
" Bounds to our Paſſions, inſpire us with new
" Affections and Deſires, and be more inti-
" mate to us than we are to our ſelves? If a
" *Creature* be the only Inſtrument and Prin-
" ciple of *Grace*, we ſhall ſoon be tempted,
" either to deny the *Grace* of God, or to make
" it only an *external* Thing, and entertain very
" mean Conceits of it. All theſe *miraculous*
" *Gifts*, which were beſtowed on the Apoſtles
" and primitive Chriſtians, for the Edification
" of the Church, all the *Graces of the Chri-*
" *ſtian Life*, are the Fruits of the *Spirit.* The
" *divine Spirit* is the Principle of *Immortality*
" in us, which firſt gives Life to our Souls,
" and will at the laſt Day raiſe our dead Bodies
" out of the Duſt; Works which ſufficiently
" proclaim him to be *God*, and which we can-
" not heartily believe, in the *Goſpel-Notion*,
" if he be not [a].

What this excellent Writer has here ſaid, appears all to be very right and juſt; and his Obſervation of the Doctrine of divine *Grace* being likely to ſuffer much by a Denial of the *Divinity* of the Holy Spirit, has been too ſadly

[a] *Sherlock's* Vindication of the Defence of *Stillingfleet*, p. 270, &c.

verified

CHAP. II. verified in the Event. How jejunely, how ſparingly, have the Abettors of the *new Schemes* inſiſted upon the Doctrine of *Grace*, and of the inviſible Workings of the *Holy Spirit*, tho' Scripture is full of the Subject? So that, beſides the Danger of loſing the ſalutary Doctrine of a proper *Satisfaction* and *Expiation*, we are further in Danger of loſing the true Scripture Notion of *Grace*, by the Oppoſition made to the Doctrine of the Trinity. I believe I might appeal to the Conſciences of thoſe Gentlemen, whether their Gratitude to *Chriſt*, for what he has done and ſuffered for us, be not in a manner loſt, and ſwallowed up in their Regards to the *Father* for *commanding*, and *accepting* it; and whether the Notion of the *Grace* of the *Holy Spirit*, be not intirely abſorbed in the Thought of the ſuperior *Aſſiſtance* of God. The Effect is natural, and I judge in this Caſe, by what I ſhould find in my ſelf. Upon their Hypotheſis, *the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghoſt* [a], will amount only to the Love of the *Father* thrice told; which ſuperſedes Both the other. And when it is ſaid, that the *Father* and *Son* will *make* their *Abode with* us [b], and in the ſame Chapter, that the *Holy Ghoſt* alſo *will abide* with us *for ever* [c], the two *Creatures* ſuperadded to the *Creator*, will appear but as Cyphers that add nothing to the Sum, while in

[a] 2 Cor xiii. 14. [b] John xiv. 23. [c] John xiv. 16.

one

one we have all, and there is nothing but that *one* to be at all depended upon. His *Preſence* alone will ſupply every thing, and his Luſtre will ſo far eclipſe both the other Perſons, that it will be hard to ſay (upon the Hypotheſis, I am mentioning) what occaſion there would be for them, or what Comfort in them. Such is the appearing *Change* made in the very Form and Eſſence of Chriſtianity by theſe *new* Doctrines, that it ſeems to loſe the very life and Soul of it, and by degrees to degenerate into little elſe but a better kind of *Judaiſm*, retaining ſtill the *Name* of Chriſtianity, but giving up the main things. CHAP. II.

While we conſider the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as interwoven with the very Frame and Texture of the Chriſtian Religion, it appears to me natural to conceive, that the whole Scheme and Oeconomy of Man's Redemption was laid with a principal View to it, in order to bring Mankind gradually into an Acquaintance with the three divine Perſons, one God bleſſed for ever. I would ſpeak with all due Modeſty, Caution and Reverence, as becomes us always in what concerns the unſearchable Counſels of Heaven: But I ſay, there appears to me none ſo natural, or ſo probable an Account of the divine Diſpenſations, from firſt to laſt, as what I have juſt mention'd; namely, that ſuch a *Redemption* was provided, ſuch an *Expiation* for Sins required, ſuch a Method of *Sanctification* appointed, and then revealed, that ſo Men might know that there are three *divine* Perſons, might

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be apprized how infinitely the World is obliged to them, and might accordingly be both *inſtructed and incited* to love, honour and adore them here, becauſe that muſt be a conſiderable part of their Employment and Happineſs hereafter. I urge not this as an Argument of the *Truth* of the Doctrine, but as a conſideration of great Weight, ſuppoſing the Doctrine *true*, for the recommending it to our Affections, and for the raiſing our Ideas of it. The divine Diſpenſations appear both rational and amiable, conſidered in this Light: And if it be not too bold to offer any *rationale* of them I would humbly preſume to ſay, that there is none ſo ſatisfactory, as what I have now mentioned. I can ſee no probable reaſon why the Church of God ſhould be, as it were, firſt put under the immediate Conduct of the *Father*, then under the *Son*, and laſt of all, under the *Holy Ghoſt*; nor why the Honour of *creating* ſhould be principally aſcribed to the *Firſt*, and the Honour of *Redemption*, as conſiderable as Creation, to the *Second*, and the Honour of *Illumination*, *Sanctification*, and *miraculous Gifts*, as conſiderable as any thing before, upon the *Third:* I ſay, I can ſee no probable reaſon for theſe Things (when the *Father*, as it ſhould ſeem, might as well have had the *ſole* Honour of all) but upon the Hypotheſis which I have hinted [a].

But

[a] Ac profectò admiranda mihi videtur divinarum Perſonarum in ſacroſanctiſſimâ Triade οἰκονομία, qua unaquoque Perſona diſtincto

But however that be, or whatever other Reaſons Divine Wiſdom, to us unſearchable, might proceed upon in every Diſpenſation towards Mankind, certain it is, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, if true (as we here ſuppoſe) runs through every part of Chriſtian Theology, and gives, as it were a new Force and Spirit to it. CHAP. II.

I have been proving, from ſeveral Topicks, that this Doctrine is *important* and *practical*, no ſlight, no *ſpeculative* Opinion. I ſhall add but one conſideration more, and that a *general* one, applicable to all other Articles of Faith, and proving them to be *practical* in a large Senſe of the Word, but a *juſt Senſe* too, and well deſerving our Notice. As we are *commanded* to *believe* whatever God reveals, *Belief* itſelf is an Inſtance of *Obedience*; and *Unbelief*, much more *Diſbelief*, is *Diſobedience* to the Commands of God. Conſequently, unleſs obedience and Diſobedience are Points of

diſtincto quaſi titulo humanum imprimis genus imperio ſuo divino obſtrinxerit, titulo illi reſpondente etiam diſtinctâ unius cujuſque Imperii Patefactione. *Patrem* colimus ſub titulo *Creatoris* hujus univerſi, qui & ab ipſa mundi *creatione* hominibus innotuerit: *Filium* adoramus ſub titulo *Redemptoris* ac *ſervatoris* noſtri, cujus idcirco divina gloria atque imperium non niſi poſt peractum in terris humanæ *redemptionis* ac *ſalutis* negotium fuerit patefactum: *Spiritum* denique *ſanctum* veneramur ſub titulo *Paracleti*, *Illuminatoris*, & *Sanctificatoris* noſtri, cujus adeo divina Majeſtas demum poſt deſcenſum ejus in Apoſtolos primoſque Chriſtianos, donorum omne genus copioſiſſima largitione illuſtriſſimum, clarius emicuerit. Nimirum tum demum Apoſtoli, idque ex Chriſti mandato, Gentes baptizabant in *plenam atque adunatam Trinitatem.*

Bull. *primitiva* Tradit. c. vi p. 399.

CHAP. II. mere *Speculation*, there is no room left for any Pretence of that kind in the Caſe now before us. Let the *Matter* of the Belief be otherwiſe ever ſo *ſpeculative*, (tho' it is not the Caſe here) yet to believe Scripture Verities, prime Verities eſpecially, is under *Precept*, is expreſs Duty; and all Duty is *practical* in a large ſenſe, as it is paying *Obedience* to God's Commandments. St. *Paul* therefore, more than once, ſpeaks of the *Obedience of Faith* [a], and with great Propriety, ſince *Believing* is *obeying* the Will of God, and is intituled to a *Reward*. It is true, *Faith* and *Obedience* (taking *Obedience* in a more reſtrained Senſe) are often contradiſtinguiſh'd: But, interpreting *Obedience* in its fulleſt and moſt comprehenſive Meaning; *Faith* is properly a *Species* of it, another kind of Obedience. Faith is a *Virtue*, both a moral and a Chriſtian Virtue, as a very ingenious and acute Writer obſerves. "As to the Nature "of *Faith*, 'tis plain that it is a *moral Virtue*, "as being that natural Homage, which the "*Underſtanding* or *Will* (for I need not here "diſpute which [b]) pays to God, in receiving "and aſſenting to what he reveals, upon his "bare Word, or Authority: It is an *Humili-* "*ation* of our ſelves, and a Glorification of "God. And as it is a *Moral*, ſo 'tis alſo a "*Chriſtian* Virtue, as being a *Duty* command-

[a] Rom. i. 5. xv. 18. xvi. 19, 26. *Conf.* Act vi. 7.
Vid. *Wolfii* curæ Philoſoph. & criticæ ad Rom. xvi. 19.

[b] See that Point fully diſcuſs'd in *Fiddes's Body of Divinity*, Vol. i. p. 333, *&c.*

"ed

" ed in the Goſpel, and an Act of Chriſtian Humility[a]. If it be objected, that *Faith* depends intirely upon *Evidence*, and therefore is no matter of *Choice*, and therefore is no Virtue, nor can properly fall under *Precept*; I deny that *Faith* depends intirely upon *Evidence*, tho' it ought to do ſo. There are *Motives* to aſſent or diſſent, as well as *rational Grounds*; and thoſe *Motives* often byaſs and determine the Judgment, either without *Reaſon*, or againſt it: Not that Men can *always* believe what they *will*, but Inclination *frequently* has a great hand in their Perſuaſions. Men can lean, and will lean to the Side which they happen to favour, upon *Motives* of Education, Habit, Authority, or Example; or of Intereſt, Vanity, Pride, Paſſion, Reſentment, and the like: And when they ſo lean to a ſide, they can be *partial* in examining, *raſh* in judging, or *precipitate* in reſolving; ſo that the *Will* may much influence *Belief*. And as to *Unbelief*, or *Disbelief*, the Influence is ſtill more apparent: For, excepting ſuch glaring Facts as force aſſent, by obtruding themſelves upon the Senſes, all other Things almoſt may be ſlighted, and ſet aſide. A Man may refuſe to *attend* to the cleareſt *Demonſtration*, or may induſtriouſly perplex it, and never let in the *Light* which might convince him of its Truth: And what he may do in that Caſe, he may much more eaſily do in others, where the Evidence is not ſo bright, or ſtrong, or

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[a] *Norris*'s Chriſtian Prudence, p. 259.

CHAP. II. comes not up to perfect Demonſtration. Theſe Things conſider'd, it muſt be allow'd, that *Faith* has at leaſt a great Dependence upon the *Will*, if it be not itſelf an Act of the Will, as appears moſt probable. *Diligence* in looking out for Evidence, *Patience* and *Perſeverance* in attending to it, *Honeſty* in conſidering, comparing, ballancing, and then determining on the ſide of Truth, theſe are all Matters of *Choice*, depending on the *Will*; and therefore a right *Faith* is a Submiſſion of our *Wills* in that Inſtance, to God. Seeing therefore that *Faith* in general is *Virtue* and *Duty*, and therefore *practical*, it follows moſt evidently, that Faith in the Doctrine of the Trinity (ſuppoſing the Doctrine *true*) is *practical* in its Nature, is both moral and Chriſtian *Duty*.

Now to ſum up briefly what has been done in this Chapter; it has been ſhown, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is of prime Conſideration for directing and determining our *Worſhip*, and that it influences *Chriſtian Practice* many ways, as forming proper *Diſpoſitions*, as raiſing and ſtrengthening the *Goſpel Motives*, and as inforcing the Doctrines of *Satisfaction* made by Chriſt, and of *Illumination* and *Sanctification* by the Holy Spirit; on all which Accounts it appears to be ſtrictly *practical*, and highly *important*: And it has been further intimated, that all Duty is practical, and that *Faith* is Duty; and therefore *this* Faith, as well as any other, and becauſe of

its important Nature, more than many other. I conclude therefore from the Premiſes laid down in this Chapter, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is *practical* enough to be a *Fundamental* Article of Chriſtianity. CHAP. II.

I muſt own, there is a narrow kind of Senſe, and very improper, of the Word *practical*, which I have obſerved in ſome Writers, according to which the Doctrine of the Trinity would not be a *practical* Doctrine: For they mean by *practical*, what concerns Practice between *Man* and *Man*, and nothing elſe. Such Perſons would not ſcruple to ſay, that *Worſhip* it ſelf is no *practical* Matter: And it muſt be allowed it is not in that Senſe; it is not a Duty of the *ſecond Table*, but of the *firſt*. It may deſerve conſidering, whether that narrow Senſe of the Word *practical* might not firſt give riſe to the Objection, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is not *practical* but *ſpeculative*; conceiving every thing to be *ſpeculative* excepting the common Offices of Life which we owe one towards another. Now indeed, according to ſuch Interpretation of the Words *practical* and *ſpeculative*, we ſhould never affirm, that This Doctrine is *practical*, or deny that it is *ſpeculative:* For the Duties depending upon it are Branches of the firſt and great Commandment, the *Love of God*, and not of the ſecond, *viz.* the *Love of our Neighbour*. But what would all this amount to, more than to a Diſpute about *Words* or *Names?* For we ſhould ſtill inſiſt upon it, that our Doctrine is *practical*,

CHAP. II. as much as any Duties of the *firſt Table* are practical; which ſuffices: And ſo at length in a juſt and proper Senſe of the Word, the Doctrine of the Trinity is practical enough to be a *Fundamental*, if the *Love of God* may be juſtly called a *Fundamental*.

But when we ſpeak of the Doctrine, we mean it of the *general* Doctrine it ſelf, not of the minute Circumſtances, or Appendages of it, which are either of a doubtful Nature, or of ſlighter Conſideration. For, "Though it "is *neceſſary*, and *eſſential* to the Chriſtian "Faith, to acknowledge Father, Son, and "Holy Ghoſt to be one eternal God, yet "there are a great many little Subtilties "ſtarted by over curious and buſy Heads, "which are not *fundamental* Doctrines, and "ought not to be thought ſo. God forbid "that all the nice *Diſtinctions* and *Definitions* "of the Schools, about *Eſſence*, *Subſiſtence*, "*Perſonality*, about *eternal Generation* and "*Proceſſion*, the Difference between *Filiation* "and *Spiration*, &c. ſhould be reckon'd among "*Fundamentals* of our Faith. For tho' we "underſtood nothing of theſe Matters (as in-"deed we do not, and it had been happy the "Church had never heard of them) yet if "we believe the *Divinity* of each Perſon, we "believe enough to underſtand the Doctrine "of *Salvation*. And tho' that fatal Diſpute "between the *Greek* and *Latin* Church, about "the *Filioque*, be of more Importance than "ſuch *ſcholaſtick Subtilties*, yet I cannot ſee

"that

" that it concerns the *Foundation* of our Faith. " For the *Greek* Church did firmly believe the " *Holy Spirit* to be *true God*, tho' they would " not own that he proceeded from the Father " *and the Son*, but from the *Father only*. And " tho' we muſt acknowledge this to be a *Miſ-* " *take*, yet it is not a *fundamental* Miſtake: " For the Doctrine of Salvation is ſecured by " believing the *Holy Spirit* to be *true God*, " without defining the *manner* of his *Proceſ-* " *ſion* [a]. I may juſt take notice by the way, that the Doctrine of the Trinity hath been but little *befriended* by the *Schoolmen*; rather hurt by them [b], tho' they did not deſign it. For, 1. By bringing up all the Difficulties and Perplexities they could themſelves invent, or elſewhere meet with, they furniſhed out Matter for the Enemies of the Faith to lay hold on; and it was from thence chiefly that the *Socinians* afterwards borrowed their Materials to work with. 2. In the next Place, by overlarding a plain Doctrine with Diſtinctions and Subtilties in great Abundance, they *diſguiſed* and *obſcured* it, that it was not eaſy to ſee thorough the Miſt they had raiſed. 3. Further, by thus perplexing and diluting it, they really *weakened* it: For it is much eaſier to oppoſe it as it ſtands trick'd up in that ſcholaſtick Form, than as it ſtands in *Scripture*,

[a] *Sherlock*'s Vindication of the Defence of *Stillingfleet*, p. 273, 274.

[b] See Dr. *Berriman*'s Hiſtory of the Trin. Controverſy, p. 378, &c.

and

CHAP. II. and in the *ancient* Fathers. 4. They brought a kind of Scandal and Diſgrace upon the Doctrine, as if it ſubſiſted chiefly upon *ſcholaſtick Subtilties*; an imputation which the Adverſaries to the Chriſtian Faith have eagerly laid hold on, and often invidiouſly charged upon the *Trinitarians* at large; tho' nothing can be more *falſe* or *injurious*. The Truth is, the very diſtinguiſhing Character of the *Trinitarians*, in the Days of the *Fathers*, was their reſting their Cauſe wholly upon *Scripture* and *Tradition*; as the diſtinguiſhing Character of the *Antitrinitarians*, was their building moſtly upon *logical* or *metaphyſical* Quirks and Subtilties [a]. What a ſtring of thoſe wanton Levities have we in *Aetius*, preſerved and anſwered by *Epiphanius* [b], enough to fright any common Reader, or to nauſeate any Man of good Senſe. The like we have again in *Eunomius*, anſwered by *Baſil*, and by *Gregor. Nyſſen.* The Catholicks ſcarce ever ran out into *metaphyſical* Notions, or Expreſſions, excepting in two Caſes, and both in the way of *Self-defence*. One was, when they were attacked with *falſe* Metaphyſicks, they then laboured to anſwer them with *true*, leſt the Adverſaries ſhould triumph on that Head, and ſeduce the Populace. The other was, when the ſcriptural and cuſtomary Expreſſions, which were uſed to convey a *good Senſe*, and could juſtly bear

[a] See *Socrat.* E. H. l. v. c. 10. Hieron. contr. *Lucifer*, Tom. iv. par. 2. col. 296. Ed. *Bened.*

[b] *Epiphan.* Hæreſ. 76. p. 924, *&c.*

no

no other, were perverted to a *bad one* by Equivocation and Wile; the Church could then have no ſo effectual Security againſt falſe Doctrines and falſe Teachers creeping in among them, to corrupt the *Faith*, and to beguile the *unwary*, as by adopting ſome new Terms, and choſen Expreſſions, for the ſupporting *old* Truths [b]. This latter Caſe is ſo naturally repreſented by a modern Writer, that I ſhall take the Freedom to borrow his Words, for the ſake of laying it in the moſt lively manner before the Reader. "Let me "ſuppoſe an *Arian* ſtanding before you, and "ſubmitting himſelf to your Examina- "tion, you aſk him, whether he believes "Chriſt to be *God?* He anſwers in the *Affir-* "*mative.* You again enquire, what *kind of* "*God* he ſuppoſes him to be? He replies, "ſuch a God as the *Bible* makes him. This, "you'll complain, is *colluſive* Language; how- "ever, you requeſt him to ſatisfy you, whe- "ther he believes the Son to be *truly* and *pro-* "*perly* God? To this he ſaith, *Yes*, conſiſtently enough with his *own* Notion of "God, tho' not with *yours.* But you far- "ther aſk, does he believe him to be *one* "*with the Father?* To this he likewiſe replies, "in the *Affirmative.* You then preſs him "with another Queſtion, *How* is he one with "the Father, is he of the *ſame Eſſence* with "the Father? To this the *Arian* anſwers, by

[b] See Dr. *Berriman*'s Hiſtory of the Trinitarian Controverſy, p. 174——179.

"aſking

CHAP. II.

CHAP. II. " aſking you what you mean by *Eſſence?* If " you comply with his Deſire, and explain " your Notion of the Term, you are *una-* " *voidably* drawn into *metaphyſical* Points [a]. Thus we ſee, *metaphyſical* Terms may be ſometimes uſed by the Orthodox ſide, when it is *unavoidable*; that is, when it is neceſſary to guard againſt *Equivocation* and *Diſguiſe*, for the preſerving the *true Faith*, and for the excluding ſuch *Miniſters* as would corrupt the Goſpel Truths, and miſlead the People committed to their Care. But then it is wrong to blame thoſe honeſt and conſcientious Guides for making uſe of the only Remedy which is left them, and which nothing but the utmoſt Neceſſity, brought upon them by the Prevarication of others, would ever make them chuſe. It is plain by this and the like Inſtances, that they are not fond of *Metaphyſicks*, not ſo much as of the *Terms:* Nor would there be any occaſion for new Words, or any uſe of them, if many had not learn'd to undermine the *ancient* Faith, by affixing *new* and *wrong* Ideas to the *ancient* Forms. The very Nature of the thing ſpeaks it ſelf: and the like Methods have been uſed in moſt other Forms and Teſts, as daily Experience has ſhewn the Neceſſity of it. Thus, to inſtance in the common Caſe of *Oaths* to a Government, they are uſually worded in as full and expreſſive Terms as can be deviſed: And yet That ſometimes is not

[a] Reply to Mr. *P. C.*'s Letter, p. 11, 12.

thought

thought ſufficient, unleſs it be further added, *without any Equivocation*, or *mental Reſervation*, or ſomething of like kind. I ask my Reader's Pardon for digreſſing a while from the particular Point I was upon: But theſe Reflections came naturally in my way, and may perhaps be of uſe as to the main Thing: And now I paſs on to a new Chapter. CHAP. III.

CHAP. III.

Shewing, that the Doctrine of the Trinity is ſufficiently inſiſted upon in Scripture to be deem'd an Article of prime Importance.

OUR Diſpute muſt here be with the Dutch *Remonſtrants*. The moſt celebrated Men amongſt them, were *Epiſcopius*, and *Limborch*. I ſhall conſider them Both with Care; that it may be ſeen by the Things wherein they agree, what is it that Both aim at, and by the Points wherein they differ, how Both of them were at a Loſs for any ſound Principle of Reaſon to proceed upon: And the Concluſion which perhaps may naturally reſult from all, will be this, that they had ſome *Motives* or ſpecious *Colours*, for the Perſuaſion which they jointly entertain'd, but no *rational Grounds* for it. CHAP. III.

1. I begin with the learned *Epiſcopius*, as the principal Man. The Sum of what his Sentiments on this Head amount to, is, that the Doctrine of the Trinity, as to the main Subſtance

CHAP. III. Subſtance of it, is *certain* and *clear*, but yet not *neceſſary* to be believed in order to Salvation, nor important enough to juſtify an *Anathema* againſt the Impugners of it, or for the rejecting their Communion.

Firſt, I ſay, he admits our main Doctrine as *true* and *certain*, being plainly taught in *Scripture*: This appears from the *Confeſſion* of the *Remonſtrants*, where the Doctrine is taught in full and ſtrong Terms [a], as likewiſe from other places in *Epiſcopius*'s Works [b]. Next, I obſerve, that in his Diſcuſſion of the Queſtion of the *Perſpicuity* of Scripture, againſt *Bellarmin*, he declares the Doctrine of the Trinity (ſuch no doubt he muſt mean as the *Remonſtrant*'s *Confeſſion*, and his own other Writings contain) is *clear*, *perſpicuous*, and *eaſy* to be underſtood [c].

[a] Cæterum diſtincte ac relate conſideratur Deus ſub Trina Hypoſtaſi, ſive tribus perſonis.— Solus Pater originis omnis expers—ſed qui deitatem tamen ſuam, tum *Filio unigenito*,— tam etiam *Spiritui* Sancto——*ab æterno* communicavit.—— *Filius* ergo & *Spiritus* Sanctus ejuſdem cum Patre deitatis, ſeu divinæ eſſentiæ ac naturæ, abſolute ac communiter conſideratæ, conſortes ſunt: prout inter alia; maxime probatur ex *divinis* nominibus, ſeu titulis, item ex *divinis* proprietatibus, & operationibus, quæ utrique in ſacris literis *aperte* paſſim tribuuntur, *Remonſtrant. Confeſ.* c. iii. apud Epiſcop. Op. Vol. ii. p. 78.

[b] *Certum* eſt tribus hiſce perſonis *divinitatem*, ſive *divinas* perfectiones in ſcriptura tribui, *Epiſcop. Inſtit.* l. iv. p. 333.

Mirum non videri debere, ſi tribus hiſce perſonis *una eademque natura divina* tribuatur, cum iis ſcriptura *divinas* iſtas perfectiones, quæ naturæ *divinæ* propriæ ſunt, tam exerte attribuat, *Epiſcop.* ibid.

[c] Atqui, ait, ſcriptura tradit ſumma *myſteria*. Quæ, inquam, illa? Primo, ait, de *divina Trinitate*. Atqui ea, prout ſcriptura tradit, nego *obſcura*, nedum *obſcuriſſima* eſſe. Addo, ea *clara*, *perſpicua*, & *facilia intellectu* eſſe, prout & quatenus ea in ſcriptura traduntur, *Epiſcop. Inſtit.* l. iv. c. 18. p. 269.

Not-

Notwithſtanding all this, the ſame *Epiſcopius* was pleaſed to deny the *Neceſſity* of believing the *eternal Generation* of the Son (which with him appears to be the ſame with denying his *eternal Exiſtence*) and conſequently, the *neceſſity* of believing the received Doctrine of the *Trinity*. And he denied the Neceſſity of ſo believing, as for ſeveral other Reaſons, ſo principally for this, becauſe the *Scripture* had neither directly, nor indirectly declared the *Neceſſity* of the Doctrine, tho' it had taught the *Truth* of it [a].

But then again, I muſt obſerve of him, that he ſeems to me, not ſo properly to have denied the *Neceſſity* of believing that Doctrine (in our Senſe of *Neceſſity*) as the *Neceſſity* of pronouncing an *Anathema* upon the Impugners, which he conceived muſt follow upon the other, and which he interpreted to ſuch a rigid Senſe, as to mean ſentencing the Men directly to *Hell Fire*, or to everlaſting Damnation. This laſt Particular, was what he chiefly, or ſolely heſitated upon, when he came to explain: Or he would be thought, at leaſt, to mean no more;

[a] Hactenus ergo de *veritate* articuli hujus agimus, reſtat, ut videamus de ejus *credendi neceſſitate*,— Argumenta pro parte negante mihi longe videntur præponderare. 1. Quia nuſpiam in ſcriptura id *neceſſarium creditu* eſſe aſſeritur, nec per bonam nedum neceſſariam conſequentiam ex ea elicitur.

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. l. iv. c. 34. p 338.

Certum eſt iis, qui ſic errant, in ſcripturis nuſpiam, nec diſerte, neque in terminis, neque per manifeſtam conſequentiam, *Anathema* dici. Quod autem in ſcripturis non eſt, etiamſi veriſſimum ſit, neceſſarium tamen dogma non eſſe ipſi doctores in ſynopſi ſua adſerunt, *Epiſcop. Opp.* Vol. ii. p. 295.

CHAP. II. as appears from his own Words, in his Anſwer to the *Leyden Divines* [a]; as alſo from his manner of wording the Queſtion in his *Inſtitutions* [b], and elſewhere [c].

But that *Epiſcopius* did not deal fairly and uprightly in this Matter, may be made appear from ſeveral Conſiderations, as, 1. Becauſe he aggravated the Buſineſs of an *Anathema*, beyond what he had Reaſon for; which makes it look like Pretence. 2. Becauſe he was not conſiſtent with himſelf, either in his Doctrine

[a] Author iſte diferte & in terminis *Socinianos* inter eos collocat quibus ſalus abjudicanda non eſt. Id nuſpiam fecerunt *Remonſtrantes*. At *Anathema* illis non dicunt. Eſto: ſed nec negant *Anathema* illis dicendum eſſe. Quid ergo? ἐπέχουσι, neutrum dicunt.— Ne quid præcipitent, malunt relinquere tam ſeverum ac grave judicium Deo & tempori uſque dum cauſas ſatis graves habebunt, ut in alteram partem cum certa animi fiducia deſcendant.——Ex altera parte occurrere vident diram ac funeſtam *Anathematos*, atque *æternæ condemnationis* ſententiam: A qua tantopere ſe abhorrere profitentur, ut eam niſi pleniſſimè perſuaſi ferre non audeant adeoque ferre illicitum ſibi credant,

Epiſcop. Reſponſ. ad ſpecim. calumn. p. 295.

[b] Utrum ſcilicet præciſe *ad ſalutem ſcitu & creditu neceſſarium* ſit, Jeſum peculiari iſto quem adſtruximus modo Filium Dei eſſe, iiſque qui id negant, aut in dubium vocant, ac proindè id confiteri non audent, *Anathema* ſit dicendum?

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. l. iv. c. xxxiv. p. 338.

[c] Stabat jam animo *Remonſtrantium* hæc ſententia; nulli doctrinæ, nulli homini *Anathema* dicere, niſi cui *Deus* ipſe *Anathema* dicit, vel expreſſis verbis, vel ſic, ut per conſequentiam omni exceptione majorem & cuivis obviam, id deum dicere colligi poſſit. Deum non reperiunt *Anathema* dicere, *&c.*—— Abſit a *Remonſtrantibus*, ut tam promptam habeant ſpongiam qua ex albo *vitæ æternæ* infinitas animarum alioquin ſanctiſſimarum expungant, ob ignorantiam earum rerum, quæ ſufficiunt ad doctiſſimi cujuſque induſtriam exercendam ut eas poſſint intelligere, aut ſi forte eas intelligant, adeo tenues ac ſubtiles ſunt ut eas perſuadere aliis pæne impoſſibile ſit.

Apolog. pro Confeſſ. Remonſtrant. p 136.

or Conduct. 3. Becauſe he has laid down a very fallacious Rule for judging of *Neceſſaries*. 4. Becauſe he has done the like in other inſtances alſo, and with as little Reaſon, only to afford ſhelter for the *Socinians*. CHAP. III.

1. I ſay, firſt, He has aggravated the matter of an *Anathema*, beyond what he had Reaſon for. When St. *Paul* delivered over to *Satan*, the Deſign of it was kind and ſalutary, that *The Spirit might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus*[a]. If Men muſt not have warning given them of their *evil Ways*; all friendly Reproof is at an End; and it will be unlawful to tell them, however juſt or neceſſary the Occaſion be, that they are in a dangerous State, and upon the verge of Deſtruction. The declaring ſuch a Caſe publickly, if it be right and true, is an eminent Act of Charity both to them, and to the World.

But further; every *Anathema* upon a *Doctrine*, is not an *Anathema*, in *Epiſcopius*'s Senſe, upon the *Perſons* teaching it[b]. The Doctrine may be cenſured as pernicious and deteſtable, and yet the Patrons of it believed to be in a *ſalvable* State, on Account of *invincible* Ignorance, or Prejudices, or ſome unhappy

[a] 1 Cor. v. 5.

[b] Diſtinguendum Judicium de *Hominibus*, a Judicio de *Rebus ipſis*. De *Hominibus*, præſtat Judicium cohibere, Eoſque Dei Judicio relinquere, ſaltem niſi apertiſſimæ judicandi Rationes adſint: de *Rebus ipſis*, Dogmatibus nempe, Cultibus, Regimine, ex Dei Verbo judicare licet.

Alphonſ. Turretin. de Articul. Fundament. p. 39.

CHAP. III. *warmth* of Temper, or enthuſiaſtic diſorder of Mind. It is no certain Conſequence, that we muſt therefore condemn the Men to *Hell-fire*, or preſume to eraſe them in our Opinion out of the *Book of Life*, only becauſe we pronounce their Doctrines falſe, or wicked, or ſubverſive of the Goſpel [c].

Farther, merely renouncing, or refuſing *Communion* with ſome Perſons, may ſometimes not amount to any *judicial* Cenſure at all, but may be only taking due Care of our own *Salvation*, and conſcientiouſly providing that we be not found Partakers in other men's Sins.

Theſe Things conſidered, it is plain that *Epiſcopius*'s ſo tragical Exclamations againſt denouncing an *Anathema* upon the *Socinian* Doctrines, or againſt *renouncing* Communion with the Men, were carried too far, and aggravated beyond Reaſon. He might have condemned their Doctrines as pernicious or dangerous; and he might have declared the Doctrine of the *Trinity* highly *important*, or generally *neceſſary* to Salvation, without paſſing any ſuch *terrible* ſentence upon particular Men: Which yet if he had, might reaſonably have been conſtrued as no more than a friendly Warning, and a Declaration of his Senſe.

[c] Adeſt quippe, et in *vitiis*, atque *peccatis*, ita ut in *ignorantia* atque *erroribus*, duplex remedium: Alterum ex parte noſtra, nimirum *Pœnitentia*, ſeu generalis ſeu particularis; alterum a parte Dei, putà ejus *miſericordia*; quorum ope ut *peccatis* graviſſimis, ita et graviſſimis *erroribus* veniæ locum dari poſſe, a nemine negari poteſt. *Alphonſ. Turretin.* de Articulis Fundamental. p. 5.

2. I

2. I obſerve farther, that he was not very conſiſtent with himſelf, either in his *Doctrine*, or his *Conduct*, ſo far as concerns our preſent Article. It appears from the publick *Confeſſion* of himſelf and Friends, and from what I have cited beſides, that he held the Doctrine of the Trinity, as commonly received, to be *true*, *certain*, and *clear*: And yet when he comes to juſtify himſelf in his refuſing to condemn the *Socinians*, or their Doctrines, there he falls to talking of the *obſcurity* of thoſe Articles which the *Socinians* rejected, ſuch as few beſides the *learned* were able to *underſtand*, ſcarcely they, and fewer could believe[a]. Now one would be glad to know of what kind of Things he is there ſpeaking. If he intends his Reflexion upon the *Appendages* to the main Doctrine, or upon *ſcholaſtic Subtilties*, (ſome true and ſome falſe) Thoſe were not the Things, or however not the *only* Things, which any one could blame the *Socinians* for rejecting; ſo that this kind of Excuſe is intirely wide and foreign, and the making uſe of it is playing upon his Readers: But if he means the *main Doctrine* of the Trinity, for the rejecting whereof the *Socinians* highly deſerve Cenſure, why does he here repreſent it as *obſcure*, or ſcarce credible, when at other Times, he admits it as a *clear* and a *certain* Truth? I ſee no way of reconciling *Epiſcopius* to *Epiſcopius*, in Things ſo contradictory and inconſiſtent. CHAP. III.

[a] See the laſt Quotation from the *Apology*, &c.

CHAP. III. As to his *Conduct*, there was a farther Inconſiſtency, in his condemning the *Calviniſtical* Doctrines of *abſolute Predeſtination* &c. as Impiety, and Blaſphemy, and that publickly, and yet refuſing to do the like by the *Socinian* Tenets, which certainly had no more claim to Favour than the other. And how far was ſuch a Cenſure ſhort of denouncing an *Anathema* againſt the *Calviniſts* for holding them; tho' at the ſame time he profeſſed, not to pronounce any *Anathema* where God had not pronounced one? Where could he find any ſcripture *Anathema* againſt *Abſolute* Predeſtination (tho' I muſt own I diſlike the Doctrine, as well as he) or where could he find it ſaid in *terms*, or by plain *Conſequence*, that it is *neceſſary* to Salvation to believe it *conditional*, more than he might find for the belief of the Doctrine of the *Trinity* alſo, if he pleaſed? His *Conduct* therefore appears, in that inſtance, to have been inconſiſtent, and not of a Piece with it ſelf. It was objected to the *Remoſtrants* [a] that they made *Blaſphemers* of the *Calviniſts*, but eaſily paſſed over the *Socinians* without ſuch Cenſure: And all the Excuſe made for it, was, that the *Cal-*

[a] Secundum membrum eſt, quod *Remonſtrantes*, cum in declaratione ſententiam ſuam de *Prædeſtinatione* et Articulis ei annexis declarent, doctrinam Eccleſiarum *Reformatarum* non modo κατ' ἀντίφρασιν rejiciant, ſed eam quoque *Impietatis* ac *Blaſphemiæ* condemnant; in hac tamen doctrina (Sc. *Trinitatis*) *Hæreticos* nullos, aut *Hæretica* nulla dogmata improbent, damnent, aut *Anathemata* percutiant.

Vid. Apolog. pro Confeſs. Remonſtr. p. 135.

viniſtical Doctrines were very *notorious*, and the *Calviniſts* had been very ſevere, cruel, and inhuman in their Way of ſupporting them[a]. But ſurely, the *Socinian* Blaſphemies were as *notorious* as any could be: And how could the *Calviniſtical* Doctrines (ſuppoſing them bad) be ever the worſe, or amount to *Blaſphemy* or *Impiety* ever the more, for the Cruelty of their Patrons and Abettors? There is no juſt or conſiſtent Account to be given of this *unequal* Conduct, except it be this; that Blaſphemies of *Adverſaries* (ſuppoſing them ſuch) are real *Blaſphemies* and deſerve an *Anathema*; but Blaſphemies of *Friends*, or of Brethren in Affliction, are innocent, and deſerve no *Anathema* at all. When the *Remonſtrants* have ſaid all they can, They will not be able to perſuade the Chriſtian World, that thoſe *Calviniſtical* Doctrines (tho' I take them to be wrong) are worſe than the *Socinian*; or that

CHAP. III.

[a] Nec enim mirum eſt *Remonſtrantes* doctrinam iſtam *Calviniſticam* rejeciſſe paſſim in ſuâ *declaratione*, et quæ ex ea conſequuntur, *Impietates* et *Blaſphemias* damnaſſe ex profeſſo, a cæteris autem ex profeſſo dampandis abſtinuiſſe. Iſtud ut facerent, graviſſimas Cauſas habebant: nam ſententia iſta *Hæretica* Calvini jam *nota* erat, vel pueris a furno et lacu redeuntibus: Patroni ejus non damnaverant tantum *contrariam veritatem*, ſed etiam *intolerabilem* Eccleſiis ſuis judicaverant; Profeſſores exauthoraverant &c.——Iſtam ſententiam ut coloribus ſuis ad vivum depingerent (*Remonſtrantes*) neceſſarium erat; idque eo magis quod eam, prout jacet, *Peſtem* credant, et *venenum* Religonis omnis, cum qua forte *Hæreſis* nulla alia comparari mereatur; et tamen nihilominus eam, ut Fundamentum et Baſin Religionis pene totius Chriſtianæ ſtatui et propugnari videant.

Apolog. pro Confeſs. p. 135, 136.

CHAP. III. a Charge of horrid *Impiety*, *Blaſphemy*, *Peſt*, *Poyſon*, and *Hereſy*, is juſtifiable in one Caſe, and not in the other: ſo that upon the whole, it might be very eaſy to retort upon the *Remonſtrants* their own tragical Exclamations againſt denouncing an *Anathema:* For let them but have the Direction of it, and they diſcover no great Averſion to it upon *weighty Occaſions*, as to them appear; and in Doctrines which they judge to be of great *Importance*, they could be very ſmart and ſevere in their *Cenſures*.

3. But the moſt material Thing of all, is to examine *Epiſcopius*'s Rule for determining *Neceſſaries*, which ſeems to be very fallacious. He would have a Thing declared *neceſſary* in Scripture, either *expreſsly*, or by plain *Conſequence*. Here I know not what he would call a *plain Conſequence:* otherwiſe indeed, the Rule may be very juſt. I take it, if the *Truth* of a Doctrine be fully and plainly taught in *Scripture*, and it appears from the Nature and Quality of the Doctrine itſelf, that it is *important*, and that much depends upon it, that then Scripture has by *plain Conſequence* declared the *neceſſity* of believing ſuch Doctrine, by declaring its *Truth*. If the Rule be thus interpreted, then by the ſame Rule, The Doctrine of the *Trinity* is important in a *Scripture-view*, and ought to be reckoned among the *neceſſaries*. By *Epiſcopius*'s own Account of it (as before obſerved) it is *true*, it is *certain*, it is *clear*, as proved from Scripture; and

and by many Arguments recounted in the laſt Chapter, it has been ſhown that it influences our *Worſhip*, and bears a conſiderable Part in what concerns the *Chriſtian Life*: Therefore Scripture in making known this Doctrine, has by *plain Conſequence* taught us the *neceſſity* of believing it, and the *Danger* of rejecting it. If Men have the uſe of their rational Faculties, and are able to argue and infer, they need not be *expreſsly* told that ſuch a Doctrine as that is, is *important* and *weighty*, and *worth* the contending for: Let but Scripture once aſcertain its *Truth*, and every Man's common Senſe will ſupply the reſt. CHAP. III.

When St. *Paul* was minded to convince the *Corinthians* of the *neceſſity* of believing the *Reſurrection* of the dead, he thought it ſufficient to ſhew the Connexion which that Doctrine had with *Chriſtianity* itſelf; to intimate, that their other *Faith was vain* without that, and all *preaching vain*[a]; and that the denying that Doctrine, was in effect, denying the whole Chriſtian Religion. Therefore that Doctrine was *neceſſary* in the higheſt Degree, as common Senſe muſt conclude: The very Nature of the Doctrine, and its Connexion with the whole Frame and Body of revealed Religion declared it. The like I ſay of the Doctrine of the Trinity; not that it is neceſſary in the ſame *Degree* with the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, but in *proportion*, while much depends

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 14. 17.

CHAP. III. upon it, tho' not ſo much as does upon the other. Indeed neither of them are ſo *neceſſary* but that *natural Religion* might ſubſiſt without them, upon a Belief of the *immortality* of the Soul [a]: But Both are very highly neceſſary in a Chriſtian Light, and in a Scripture-view, as Both, in their ſeveral Ways and Degrees, ſupport the Fabrick of Chriſtianity, and the Body of revealed Religion. If a *right knowledge* of *God*, if *Diſpoſitions* ſuitable to the *heavenly* State we expect, if the Regulation and Specification of our *Worſhip*, if the due and proper Force of *Goſpel-motives*, if juſt Ideas of the OEconomy of Man's *Redemption* and *Salvation*, and of the Doctrine of *Grace*; if theſe and other the like momentous concerns hang upon the true notion of the ever bleſſed Trinity, can we after that, want any particular *Text* or *Texts*, to declare to us the *neceſſity* of our believing it? Not but that particular Texts may be found which are explicite enough upon that Head, as I

[a] Some very learned Men have been of Opinion that the ſame Perſons who in that time denied the *Reſurrection*, denied alſo any future State; which they infer from ſome reaſonings which St. *Paul* made uſe of againſt them. (*Vitringa.* obſerv. ſacr. l. iv. c. ix. p. 924. *Buddeus.* Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 299.) But I much queſtion whether they argue juſtly on that Head, or whether St. *Paul* reaſoned upon their *Hypotheſis*, or upon ſome other Principles. It ſeems to me, that all St. *Paul's* reaſonings in that Chapter, may be accounted for upon this *Poſtulatum*, that if there be no *Reſurrection*, the *ſeparate Soul*, being under the *Sentence* and Dominion of Death, cannot emerge and riſe up to Life and Happineſs, but muſt inevitably *periſh* under ſuch State of *Puniſhment*, having no deliverer. But I offer this only as a Conjecture, appearing to me not improbable.

may

may ſhow hereafter: But in the mean while, I obſerve, that our Cauſe does not need that additional Strength, does not depend upon it.

Beſides, I would remark by the Way, that a diſtinction might be properly enough made between a neceſſity of *believing* a Scripture-doctrine, and a neceſſity of *not denying*, or *not oppoſing* it: For certainly, a Man may be under a ſtricter Obligation *not to deny or oppoſe* a Scripture-verity, than poſitively to *believe* it; and it is a greater Sin, publickly to *deny* and *oppoſe* a ſacred Truth, than it is merely not to admit it. Yet the *Socinians*, whom *Epiſcopius* was inclined to ſcreen, did not only forbear giving Aſſent to the Doctrine, but they *diſſented*, and publickly *oppoſed* it with all poſſible Vigour, nay, and with more Wiles and Artifices, than became plain honeſt Men. Now, I take it, that tho' an explicite Knowledge or Belief, of many *inferior* Scripture Truths is not ordinarily required, yet it may be required and ſtrictly too, not to *deny* or *oppoſe* even them, ſuppoſing them *plain*; becauſe, it is, in effect, denying the *Veracity* of God, or the *Inſpiration* of Scripture. I know of no Diſpenſation there is for *denying* and *oppoſing* any one plain *Scripture-truth*, contriving artificial Eluſions for it, any more than there is for *diſobeying* a plain *Precept*, in like manner eluding it; nor how a *partial Faith*, in ſuch a Caſe, is at all more juſtifiable than a *partial Obedience:* for indeed *Disbelief* is *Diſobedience*, as I obſerved above. But the Obſervation is much ſtronger when we find that

CHAP. III. that the Truth *denied* and *oppoſed* is a very *material* Truth, one that has much depending upon it, one that lies near the *Foundation*. How *Epiſcopius* could own it to be a Truth, and yet think it no crime, or none deſerving a publick Cenſure, to *deny* and *oppoſe* it, is unaccountable. We do not want to have it ſaid in Scripture, that it was *neceſſary* in particular, explicitely to *know* and *believe* it: But certainly if it be a *Truth* revealed by God, as he allows, and not of the ſlighteſt kind neither, it was *neceſſary* not to *deny* or *oppoſe* it, and the Man would deſerve the *publick Cenſure* of the Church, that ſhould preſume ſo to do. Therefore the learned *Epiſcopius* has in this Inſtance, impoſed a *falſe* Rule of judging upon us, and ſuch as he himſelf did not allow of in other Caſes. For, how could he attempt to charge *Impiety*, *Blaſphemy*, and the worſt of *Hereſies* (as he pretends) upon the *Calviniſts*? was it by citing any Scripture-Texts, which declare the *neceſſity* of believing the diſtinguiſhing Doctrines on his Side? No, but he endeavoured to ſhow that the *Calvinian* Doctrine, remotely concluded in *Impiety*, *Blaſphemy*, *Hereſy*; and that Conſideration he ſuppoſed ſufficient to found his ſevere Charge againſt the *Calviniſts* upon; though in Points more *perplexed* and *obſcure*, and leſs agreed in, among Chriſtians ancient and modern, than the Doctrine of the *Trinity*. So natural is it for Men of the greateſt pretended *Moderation* to confine it chiefly to their

own

own Friends, or Party, and to exclude their Adverſaries from the Benefit of it. Faults of this kind will often happen on both Sides, while Men are Men; And the Foundation of all is, that Men will not agree about *neceſſaries*, while They agree that there ought to be *Unity* ſo far, and no farther. Many Reconcilers have thought of various Expedients, and different *Degrees* of *Latitude:* The worſt that could be invented is *indifference* to all Religions; which is like giving up an *Inheritance*, and conſenting to *ſtarve*, for the ſaving of Trouble and Conteſt about it. But I paſs on. CHAP. III.

4. A further Fault I obſerved in the learned *Epiſcopius*, was, that he extended the ſame fallacious Rule to other Doctrines of Moment, beſide this of the *Trinity*, and, as it ſeems, in order to contrive a ſhelter for his favourite *Socinians*. He denied the *neceſſity* of believing the *divine Preſcience*, as to future Contingents [a], tho' at the ſame time he admitted the *Truth* of the Doctrine, in Conſideration of the *Scripture Prophecies* [b]. Indeed, as to the

[a] Supereſt ut inquiramus, an ad Salutem æternam conſequendam, ſcitu creditуque neceſſarium ſit Deo *Præſcientiam talem* competere, adeo ut qui Deo eam competere aut negat, aut affirmare non audet, ſalute æterna propterea excidat? In genere, nos id ad ſalutem ſcitu creditуque neceſſarium eſſe negamus. 1. Quia nullum neceſſitatis indicium, aut veſtigium ejus in Scriptura reperire eſt, ſive indicium illud dicatur eſſe *clarus Textus*, ſive *Conſequentia* per ſe evidens.——Qui contra affirmat, ei incumbit Probatio.

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. Lib. iv. c. 18. p. 302.

[b] Epiſcop. ibid. c. 17. p. 299. &c.

Queſtion

CHAP. III. Queſtion taken in the preciſe Terms as he has ſtated it, *whether it be ſtrictly neceſſary to Salvation to know and believe it*, and *whether a Man ſhall forfeit his Salvation for not believing, or not knowing it*; I ſay, in this preciſe View, it is hard to know how to anſwer, ſince it ſeems to proceed upon a wrong Suppoſition of a certain Quantity of *Faith*, or of *explicite Knowledge*, as neceſſary to the Salvation of every Perſon; about which we can determine nothing. But put the Queſtion, whether the Doctrine be not highly *important*, and richly *worth contending for*, or whether the *Impugners* of it be not *very much to blame*, deſerving *publick Cenſure* here, and Puniſhment hereafter, for ſuch *pernicious* Doctrine; and then the Anſwer is eaſy, and certain: It is a very *important* Doctrine, and the denial of it, eſpecially if *open* and obſtinate, highly *criminal*. *Epiſcopius* himſelf allows, that it is *neceſſary to Salvation* to *believe* and *know* that God *foreſees* whatever he has *determined* to bring to paſs; becauſe God himſelf ſtrongly inſiſts upon it, as a mark of Diſtinction, whereby he will be proved to be the true God, in oppoſition to all rival Deities[a]. But with Submiſſion, may there not

[a] Quænam iſta ſint quæ de divina Scientia, *omnibus ac ſingulis ſcitu credituque ſunt neceſſaria?* Tenemur ſcire ac credere, Deum ſcire ea omnia quæ a divino aliquo decreto ſuo dependent.——Ratio eſt, quia hanc Scientiæ Perfectionem Deus ſibi tanto cum Zelo adtribuit, & adtribui vult, ut per eam, & propter eam, ſe *diſcernat, diſcernique* velit, ab omnibus *Dæmonibus*,

not be thouſands of illiterate Chriſtians, who have not the *explicite* Knowledge of that Matter, or may never conſider it? Why then is this more *neceſſary to Salvation* (in that ſtrict Senſe of the Phraſe) than the other? In truth, neither of them are ſo, in that rigorous Senſe: But both are highly *important*, and I conceive, *equally* ſo; becauſe one implies the other, and they ſtand or fall together. God muſt *foreknow* future *Contingents*, if he forms Decrees long before-hand about them. If he *decreed* and *foretold* long before, that *Judas* ſhould be permitted *voluntarily* to betray Chriſt; He muſt have *foreſeen* likewiſe that *Judas* would *voluntarily* do it, and *how* he would do it. There is no accounting for numerous Prophecies, without the Suppoſition of God's *foreknowing* future Contingents; and ſince God makes this the diſtinguiſhing Character of the *true God*; it is in Effect diſowning the *Truth* of *Scripture*, and *denying* the *true* God[a], to deny the *divine* Preſcience. How then can

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nibus, Gentiumq; *Diis* atque *Idolis*, tanquam *verum* unicumque *Deum*, qui *ſolus* idcirco ſummo Honore, cultu, et obſequio dignus ſit, uti videre eſt ex *Iſa.* xli. 23.

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. Lib. iv. c. xviii. p. 303.

[a] Mr. *Lobb*, in few words, well repreſents the caſe as follows: "From this notion of theirs, *revealed* Religion receives a "Wound: For if God doth not know *future Contingents*, "how can he *foretell* them? And if he cannot *foretell* them, "of what *Uſe* is the *prophetical* Part of the holy Scriptures? "And if they muſt be rejected as *uſeleſs*, will not the *Deiſts* "be abundantly gratified? or if it be yielded that God doth "not *foreknow* future Contingents, it will neceſſarily follow, "that his Knowledge is not *infinite*, and he cannot be *God*. *Growth of Error.* p. 188.

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the *Socinians* be excuſed in that matter, eſpecially conſidering how *preſumptuous* they are in it, going upon this *proud* Principle, that they are able to *ſearch the Almighty to perfection*, or that nothing is to be believed but what they can *comprehend*. Let but the *Modus* of the divine Knowledge be admitted as *inſcrutable* to weak Mortals, and then all Difficulties are over with us at once: The *infinite* Perfections of the divine Mind ought in this caſe, to ſilence all Objections. But if Men will think too *meanly* of *God*, and too *highly* of *themſelves*, and from thence proceed to teach ſuch Doctrines as undermine the *Scripture-prophecies*, and the *divine* Perfections, and ſap the Foundations both of *natural* and *reveal'd* Religion; can there be any juſt Excuſe made for ſuch a wanton Abuſe of Liberty, and ſuch unwarrantable Conduct in Affairs of the laſt conſequence to the *Salvation* of mankind? But enough hath been ſaid to ſhow, that *Epiſcopius*'s famed Rule for judging of *neceſſaries*, is fallacious and wrong, and ſuch as he himſelf did not proceed by in condemning the *Calviniſts*; tho' he was diſpoſed to make uſe of it for favouring the *Socinians*. The *Importance* of any Doctrine is not to be judged of merely from the *Declarations* of Scripture concerning its *neceſſity*, but from the Nature and Quality of the Doctrine it ſelf, and the Relation it bears to the other parts of *revealed* Religion, and from the *Miſchiefs* likely to follow upon *oppoſing* it.

II. From

II. From *Epiſcopius* the Chief Leader, I paſs on to his Kinſman and Follower, the learned *Limborch*; of whoſe Principles in this Cauſe I ſhall treat the more briefly, becauſe they are the ſame in the main, with what have been mentioned under the preceding Article. His Acknowledgment of the *Truth* of the common Doctrine of the *Trinity* may be inferred from his admitting the common *Confeſſion* of the *Remonſtrants*, and from what he has aſſerted in his own Works[a]: wherein he ſufficiently expreſſes the main Doctrine (if we are to judge him an honeſt Man) and proves it too, tho' not to Advantage. It is true, he afterwards drops a ſuſpicious Expreſſion[b], which requires a *candid* Interpretation, to make it bear; and he meanly talks of *Petavius*'s ingenuouſly *confeſſing*[c] that ſome of the *Ante-nicene* Fathers diſown'd the *Co-eternity* and *Co-equality* of the Son. He did

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[a] Reſtat jam ut explicemus, quiſnam ille ſit *Deus* cui *divinam* hanc naturam competere ſacræ literæ docent; *Pater* nimirum & *Filius* & *Spiritus* Sanctus. *Limborch. Theol. Chriſt.* l. ii. c. xvii. p. 97. Tribus hiſce tribuuntur *Divinæ* perfectiones: Unde concludimus *Deitatem* tribus hiſce eſſe communem. (ibid. p. 98.) Ea de *Jeſu Chriſto* Filio Dei, enuntiantur, ex quibus liquet ipſum per veram, attamen arcanam & ineffabilem generationem, Filium Dei extitiſſe——ante omnia ſæcula, et per eam Naturæ *Divinæ* conſortem fuiſſe. p. 99. Ex hiſce colligimus, *Eſſentiam Divinam* & Filio & Spiritui Sancto eſſe communem. p. 102.

[b] Sed & eſt quædam ſupereminentia Patris reſpectu Filii, & Patris ac Filii reſpectu Spiritus Sancti, ratione *dignitatis & poteſtatis*: dignius ſiquidem eſt generare quam generari, ſpirare quam ſpirari. p. 102.

[c] Sufficiat hic nobis ingenua *Dionyſii Petavii*, Doctoris inter Jeſuitas celeberrimi ac doctiſſimi *Confeſſio* &c. p. 102.

not

CHAP. III. not understand the Subtlety of the *Jesuit*, nor consider that probably it was not so much an *ingenuous Confession* of that great Man, as a *disingenuous Misrepresentation* of his to serve the Interest of the *modern* Church of *Rome*[a]. His Pretences have been abundantly confuted by Bp. *Bull*, and several other learned Hands.

However, as I said, *Limborch* has sufficiently expressed the main Doctrine, and asserted its *Truth*: we are next to observe, what he thought of the *necessity* of believing it, or of the *Importance* of it. He begins with declaring his Scruples against asserting the *necessity* of believing the *eternal Filiation* and *Divinity* of God the Son[b], while he admits the *Truth*. He conceives it not so necessary, as the owning *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*. Supposing it be not, yet it may be *necessary* notwithstanding. But if it can be proved that the *Messiah* predicted in the old Testament, is there described under such Characters as can belong only to *God* (as certainly it may) then it will be as necessary to believe him to be *God*, as to believe him to be the *Messiah*, because he cannot be the *Messiah*, un-

[a] See my *Second Defence*. Preface p. 18. *Bull*. Prolem. Sect. 8. p. 6. *Grab*. Præfat. ad Bulli opp. *Nelson*'s Life of *Bull*. p. 287.

[b] Credimus nos, alibi doceri Personam hanc esse Filium Dei respectu *Naturæ Divinæ* ac Filiationis *æternæ*.——Quandiu nobis ea Scripturæ loca non occurrunt quibus *Naturæ Divinæ* cum humana Unio perinde *Fidei Salutaris* objectum *necessarium* statuitur atque Officium *Christi* de *Jesu* credendum est, nos, licet *Veritatem* illam amplectamur, eam tamen ut *Creditu ad Salutem necessariam* definire non audemus. *Limborch*. l. v. c. ix. p. 413.

less

leſs he be alſo *God*[a]. However, as I before ſaid, admitting that one of theſe Doctrines is more *neceſſary* or more *important* than the other, (tho' they are in juſt Conſequence inſeparable) yet both may be *Fundamentals*, notwithſtanding he goes on to ſpeak of the *Obſcurity* of the Doctrine, which is abuſing it; becauſe tho' the Thing is *myſterious*, and the *Manner* obſcure, yet the main Doctrine is as *clear* as can be deſired, as clear as any Doctrines concerning the *divine* Nature, or Attributes; clear in the *general*, clear ſo far as we are bound to *believe*. See above. He was aware of this Anſwer; and therefore he endeavours next to evade the Force of it. He owns the Plea, with reſpect to ſome other fundamental Doctrines, that the *main Subſtance* of them may be *clear*, while the *Circumſtantials* only are obſcure: And he inſtances in that of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, which he ſays is *clear*, and *neceſſary* to be believed; but whether the Bodies will be *numerically the ſame*, he thinks is not clear, nor a *neceſſary* Article of Faith. This is a Point which I need not here debate; we may admit the Inſtance for Argument ſake, and now let us apply it, and ſee how far the ſame Reaſoning will bear. We receive the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, conſidered in a *general* undeterminate View; we define not the preciſe *manner*; and we admit the eternal *Divinity* of God the Son, and the Union of

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[a] Vid. *Bull* Judic. Eccl. Cathol. c. vii. Sect. 5. And ſecond Letter to Mr. *Nation*, by P. C. p. 9.

CHAP. III. all three in one Godhead, not defining the *manner* of the Union or Diſtinction: So far the Caſes appear parallel: only indeed, the Reſurrection is a Matter that falls under *Imagination*, the other belongs only to pure *Intellect*. But now comes on the Streſs of the Queſtion: He aſſerts, that the *Obſcurity* lies not in the *Circumſtantials* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, but in the very *Subſtance* of it. That we deny; and *Epiſcopius* himſelf denied it, (unleſs he greatly prevaricated) as obſerved above. And how will the Aſſertion be proved? The Profeſſor attempts it, by throwing our main Doctrine into *ſcholaſtick* Terms[a], that ſo it may inſtantly carry the Face of *Obſcurity* in the very *Words:* This is not dealing fairly with us. He does not chuſe to expreſs it ſo himſelf in other Places, where he admits the *Verity* of the Doctrine, and where he declares his own Faith; neither did *Epiſcopius*, or the common *Confeſſion* of the *Remonſtrants* ſo expreſs it. Why then muſt they chuſe one way of Expreſſion, or declaring the *Truth* of the Doctrine, and another for rejecting the *Neceſſity* of it, except it be to ſerve a Turn? The learned Profeſſor, inſtead of ſaying *one Jehovah*, or *one God*, or *one Godhead*, here chuſes the

[a] Alia vero eſt ratio eorum dogmatum quæ non in *circumſtantiis* quibuſdam, ſed in *ſeipſis* ſuaque ſubſtantia, *Obſcuritatem* involvunt: quale eſt dogma de SS. Trinitate, quod tres diſtinctæ perſonæ, una generans, altera genita, tertia ſpirata ſint *unica numero eſſentia*——. Quod ſtatim primo ſuo conceptu varias involvit difficultates quæ a dogmate ipſo ſeparari nullatenus poſſint, *Limborch*, l. v. c ix. p. 414.

Phraſe of *one numerical Eſſence*: Which is a late Scholaſtick Phraſe, and faulty more Ways than one; Firſt, becauſe the Terms themſelves are *technical* Terms, and no way neceſſary to the Chriſtian Faith; and next, becauſe they carry an *Equivocation* in them; and the Propoſition can neither be admitted, nor rejected, till it be carefully *diſtinguiſhed*. *Numerical* Eſſence in a *Sabellian* Senſe, is Hereſy: In another Senſe, it is a *Truth* darkly expreſs'd. That the Perſons are *one God*, *one Jehovah*, is of the *Subſtance* of the Doctrine; but that they ſhould be denominated one *numerical* Eſſence, is not. For, firſt, it is a Queſtion, whether the divine Unity ought to be brought under our Diſtinctions about *numerical* and *ſpecifick*, contrived for expreſſing things *finite*: and if it ſhould, it is ſtill another Queſtion, in what preciſe Senſe of the Word *numerical* (which is an equivocal Term) the Propoſition can be allowed. Both theſe Queſtions are *Circumſtantials*, and furniſhing Matter for Strife about *Words* and *Names*, not at all affecting the main Thing [x]: And the *Obſcurity* here complain'd of lies not in the Doctrine it ſelf, but in the *unfair* manner of expreſſing it, to give ſome colour for the Complaint: If any Perſon, inſtead of ſuch a plain Expreſſion, as *God's Preſence every where*, ſhould call it, *The infinite Expanſion or Diffuſion of the divine Eſſence*, it would be unfair and wrong, in two

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[x] See my *ſecond Defence*, Q. xxiii. p. 448, *&c.* alias, p. 453, *&c.*

Chap. III. Views; first, As the Terms are *ſcholaſtick*, when plainer Words would better ſerve the Purpoſes of Truth; and next, as it is running the Reader into an obſcure Speculation about *Expanſion*, what it means, and in what Senſe it may be admitted. Any Doctrines whatever may thus be involved in *Obſcurities*, by clothing them in dark and *equivocal* Terms, or by ſo contriving them as to bring in ſomething of the *Modus* into the main Doctrine, when it ought to be intirely left out, either as unknown, or as not material [a]. I am ſenſible that the Phraſe of *numerical Eſſence* has long obtained in the *Schools*, and is capable of a good Senſe: But yet *Eſſence* of *Eſſence* (ever ſince that Term came in) was always Catholick Doctrine, as *God* of *God*; and *numerical Eſſence*, a more modern Phraſe, muſt be ſo explained as to agree with the other, and to exclude a *Sabellian* Senſe. Otherwiſe it is no Doctrine of ours, but an ancient *Hereſy*. But enough has been ſaid to ſhow, that the learned *Limborch* has uſed a little too much *Art*, in repreſenting our Doctrine as *obſcure*, only by the Clouds raiſed from an *obſcure* Expreſſion. The Doctrine it ſelf is otherwiſe *clear* enough,

[a] Sæpe *res ipſa* fundamentalis eſſe poteſt, *modus* vero rei, & *circumſtantiæ* minime fundamentales. Etenim cum res ipſa tantum *in genere* revelata eſt, & tanquam *neceſſaria* a Deo impoſita, tunc certe *Res ipſa* tantum pro fundamento habenda eſt, non vero *modus* & *circumſtantiæ* quæ pari evidentia, aut cum ſimili neceſſitatis charactere revelata non ſunt. Et re vera, paucissimæ ſunt res, præſertim in *divinis*, quarum *modum* & *circumſtantias* perfecte noſcamus. *Alphonſ. Turret. de fundament.* p. 20.

as

as I have before manifeſted at large: And every plain Chriſtian will underſtand as clearly what he means when he ſays, the *three divine Perſons are one God*, as when he ſays, there will be *a Reſurrection of the Dead*[a]. Both the Expreſſions are large and indefinite, wrapped up in *generals*; not deſcending to the *minute* Circumſtances belonging to this and that, but abſtracting from them, and leaving them undetermined. CHAP. III.

I meet with nothing more in *Limborch* deſerving any particular Anſwer. He has indeed ſome additional Conſiderations in the ſame place, but ſuch as amount only to mere *Aſſertions* without Proofs, *viz.* That it is ſufficient to believe in *Jeſus* as the *Meſſiah*, and that our Faith reſpects the *Office*, not the *Perſon*, that it is enough to conſider him as *Mediator*, and the like; all precarious Aſſertions taking for granted the Matter in Queſtion, not to mention that the antient and true Notion of Chriſt as *Mediator*, implies his *Divinity*, and ſuppoſes him to be both truly *God* and truly *Man*[b]. Strange that a Perſon of his great Abilities could perſuade himſelf, that the believing in Chriſt as to his ſeveral Offices of *Prophet*, *Prieſt* and *King*, ſhould be neceſſary[c], and yet that believing in him as a *divine* Pro-

[a] L. v. c. ix. p. 414.

[b] See my *Second Defence*, Q. xvi. p. 375. alias 380.

[c] Cum itaque objectum Fidei Chriſtianæ propriè reſpiciat *munera* Chriſti, eorum Fides ac Profeſſio etiam *neceſſaria eſt*. Limb. l. v. c. ix. p. 415.

CHAP. III. phet, a *divine* Prieſt, and a *divine* King (tho' the Fact be *true* that he is ſo) ſhould be of little or no Significancy. One might as eaſily believe, that the *Soul* is of no Conſideration to the Body, as that our Lord's *Divinity*, which runs through all his Offices, and muſt enliven and invigorate every part, ſhould be of no conſideration, or ſlight, to a *Chriſtian's Faith* in theſe Offices. But this great Man, as well as his greater Predeceſſor, had his *Prejudices*; and both of them had imbibed a very falſe Notion of the ancient Churches, as if they had not conſtantly inſiſted upon the *Neceſſity* of believing the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, or had not condemned the contrary Opinions as *heretical*. That was *Epiſcopius*'s firm Perſuaſion, and he inſiſted much upon it [a], having taken up the Opinion too haſtily from Miſrepreſentations made of the *Fathers*, by ſome Moderns, not being himſelf acquainted, to any Degree of Perfection, with that kind of Learning [b]. And the like may be juſtly ſuſpected of *Limborch* alſo, who truſted to *Petavius* in that Matter, as I have already intimated. Had their Surmiſe in that Particular been juſt, I could not ſo much have blamed them for the reſt. For to make any thing *neceſſary* at this time of Day, which *anciently* was not ſo, or to conceive that the moſt pure and *primitive* Churches failed in *Neceſſa-*

[a] Epiſcop. Inſt. l. iv. c. xxxiv. p. 339, 340. Reſponſ. ad Specim. Calumn. p. 295.

[b] Vid. *Bull*, Præmonit. ad Lector. de neceſſitat. credend.

ries,

ries, is too bold and ſhocking a Thought for any candid conſiderate Man to entertain. But both *Epiſcopius* and his Diſciple were much *deceived* in that Affair, as hath been abundantly ſhown by Biſhop *Bull*; and as I ſhall endeavour alſo to make plain to the *Engliſh* Reader before I have done. And then it will the more eaſily be admitted, that the *Neceſſity* of the Doctrine is ſufficiently inculcated in Scripture, when it appears that the ancient Churches collected ſuch *Neceſſity* from the ſame Scripture. CHAP. III.

I have not yet mentioned any particular Texts declaring ſuch Neceſſity, nor do I think it needful, becauſe the *Truth* of *ſuch* a Doctrine infers its Neceſſity to as many as the Doctrine is revealed to. But yet I may obſerve, that the Inſtitution of Baptiſm in the Name of *Father*, *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*, carries with it a very ſenſible and affecting Argument of the *Importance* of the Doctrine. It is indeed, when conſidered in all its Views, a ſtrong Proof of the *Truth* of the Doctrine, as might be ſhown at large, and often has been [a]: But ſuppoſing the *Truth* proved ſufficiently from *other* Texts, then there cannot be a more

[a] See my *Sermons* at St. *Paul's*, Serm viii. p. 288, *&c.*
Biſhop *Stillingfleet's* Vindication of the Trin ty, p. 177, *&c.* 299, *&c.*
Vitringa Obſervat. Sacr. Tom. ii. c. xxii. p. 813—826.
Dr. Trapp's Lecture-Serm. p. 100—104.
Mr. Abraham Taylor's true Script. Doct. p. 91, *&c.*
To which may be added,
Baſil de Spiritu Sancto, c. ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xxvii.

CHAP. III. convincing Argument of the *Importance* of it than this; that our Bleſſed Lord himſelf has recommended it as the prime and leading Doctrine, without the explicite mention whereof a Man cannot be made a *Chriſtian*; that he has conveyed it to us in that ſolemn Form, that moſt diſtinguiſhed Manner to every Diſciple of Chriſt, as the firſt thing proper for him to be acquainted with, deſerving and requiring his moſt early Thoughts and Care, and alſo his conſtant and tendereſt Devotion ever after. On this Foundation was the Church it ſelf erected, and ſtands to this Day. What ſtronger, or more effectual Method could have been deviſed to proclaim the *Neceſſity* and high *Importance* of this great Article? A Conſideration which may receive yet further *Light* and *Strength*, by looking into Antiquity, and there obſerving what a Streſs was laid upon the *Interrogatories* in Baptiſm, and how this Article made up the principal part, if not the *whole* of the firſt Creed, and what particular Care was taken to inſtruct the Candidates in this important Doctrine previouſly to Baptiſm: But what relates to *Antiquity*, will more properly come in under a diſtinct *Chapter* deſign'd for that Purpoſe. I forbear likewiſe to inſiſt upon another *Scripture-Argument* of great Force, which St. *John*'s Writings afford me; becauſe that alſo may more conveniently be reſerved for another Place in theſe Papers.

I have

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I have now run through the three ſeveral Heads of Debate, which I undertook; ſhewing in ſo many diſtinct Chapters, that the received Doctrine of the Trinity is both *clear* and *practical*, and ſufficiently inculcated in *Scripture*, to be eſteemed an Article of high *Importance*, an *Eſſential* of Chriſtianity, a *Fundamental* Doctrine of the Goſpel, diffuſing itſelf through the whole of our Religion, and being, as it were, the very Life and Spirit of it. It remains now to be enquired, how we ought to behave towards thoſe who openly reject, or impugn it, or take part with them that do.

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Shewing, that Communion ought not to be held with Men, that openly reject the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity, and perſiſt in ſo doing.

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THIS may be argued two ways, Firſt, From expreſs Scripture Texts; and next, from the very *Nature* and *Reaſon* of the thing conſidered upon Scripture Principles.

1. I begin with Scripture Texts, St. *Paul's* Inſtructions to the *Romans*, in ſuch Caſes is: *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are ſuch, ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but their own Belly, and by good Words and fair Speeches deceive the Hearts of the Simple*[a]. The Offenders here

[a] Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

pointed

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pointed at, were moſt probably [a] the *Judaizing* falſe Teachers, thoſe that preach up Circumciſion, and the Obſervance of the Law as *neceſſary* to Salvation; a Doctrine ſubverſive of the Grace of the Goſpel, as obſerved above. The Apoſtle therefore exhorts his Chriſtian Converts to *mark* them, that is, to *beware* of them, in order to *avoid* them, and to preſerve themſelves from the Infection of their pernicious Doctrine. And as he wrote by the *Spirit* of God, and had the Gift of *diſcerning* the *Spirits* of Men, he could tell his Converts with a certain and well grounded Aſſurance the inſides of the Men; that they were Men of carnal Minds, and profligate Conſciences, uſing fair and plauſible Speeches to beguile others, for their *own* Humour, or Pleaſure, or Intereſt, or Vanity. Such indeed is the *general* Character of *Hereſiarchs* of all kinds: But yet without very clear and ſufficient Grounds appearing in Overt-Acts, Men ought not to take upon them the Liberty of an *Apoſtle*, in pronouncing upon the *inward Motives* which *Hereticks* are led by: It is ſufficient to paſs Sentence upon the Quality of the Doctrine, and to condemn it as ſubverſive of the Goſpel (if it really be ſo) and to renounce *Communion* with its open Favourers and Abettors; ſo much at leaſt is manifeſtly implied in the Advice given to *avoid* them, or turn from

[a] See *Grotius* and *Whitby*, and *Wolfius* upon the Place: And *Vitringa* Obſervat. Sacr. Lib. iv. c. 9. *Buddæi Eccleſ.* Apoſtol. p. 121.

them.

them. Receive them not as *Miniſters of Chriſt*, nor own them as *Brethren*: For they *ſerve not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; but their fair Speeches and falſe Colourings are fitted to *deceive* unwary Souls. Therefore avoid them, ſhun them, diſcountenance them, and that *openly*: For ſo *they which are approved*, will *be made manifeſt* [a], and not otherwiſe. CHAP. IV.

The ſame Apoſtle pointing to the ſame *Hereticks* elſewhere, ſays, *There be ſome that trouble you, and would pervert* [ſubvert] *the Goſpel of Chriſt: But tho' we or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed. As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any Man preach any other Goſpel unto you, than that you have received, let him be accurſed* [b]. How ſtrongly here does the Apoſtle guard againſt admitting *new* Doctrines, (ſubverſive of the old) through a common Weakneſs incident to Mankind, having Men's *Perſons in Admiration*, on account of their Parts or Learning, or their appearing Goodneſs, Sanctity, Sobriety. Tho' *we or an Angel from Heaven* ſhould preſume to do any ſuch wicked thing, *let him be accurſed*; Words very expreſſive and poignant, in order to correct the *Weakneſs* before mentioned; and another alſo near akin to it, the natural Fondneſs many have for *Novelties*. And I may further obſerve, that in ſuch Caſes we have no Concern at all with the *Virtues*

[a] 1 Cor. xi. 19. [b] Gal. i. 8, 9.

or

CHAP. IV. or *good Qualities* of falſe Teachers, be they ever ſo *real* or *great*: If they *corrupt* the *Faith* in any groſs Inſtance, that is Reaſon ſufficient for *refuſing* Communion with them, tho' they were otherwiſe bright as *Angels*. A Conſideration worth the noting, for the obviating ſome popular Pretences on this Head. I need not here enter into the Diſpute, whether the Words Ἀνάθεμα ἔϛω, amount to a ſolemn *Curſe*, or are only a Form of *Excommunication*[a]. If we take it in the firſt and moſt rigorous Senſe, it ſeems proper only to an *Apoſtle*, or *Prophet*, thus ſolemnly to *curſe* or *bleſs* in the Name of the Lord. But as the Chriſtian Church afterwards[b] often uſed the ſame Form in their *Excommunications*, the milder Senſe appears moſt probable. However that be, this ſolemn Sentence of the Apoſtle amounts at leaſt to a ſtrict Injunction or Warning to all Chriſtians, that they ſhould not communicate with Perſons who corrupt the *Faith*, (either by adding to it, or taking from it) in any groſs manner, which may be juſtly interpreted a *Subverſion* of the Goſpel of Chriſt. Such Attempts are to be held in the utmoſt Abhorrence, and the Authors of them ſhunned as Seducers and falſe Apoſtles. It cannot well be ſuppoſed, that leſs than this is implied in the Words of the Apoſtle.

[a] See *Buddæus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 808, 809.

[b] See *Suicer*. Theſaurus in voc. ἀνάθεμα.

Bingham's Antiq. of the Chriſtian Church, Lib. xvi. c. 2, 8, 16, 17.

He

He goes on to ſay, ſpeaking of the ſame Perſons in the ſame Epiſtle, *He that troubleth you ſhall bear his Judgment, whoſoever he be* [a]. *I would they were even cut off that trouble you* [b]. Which laſt Words, I underſtand, with many judicious Interpreters of *Excommunication*; and it is confirmed by what is ſaid in the ſame Place, *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump* [c]; intimating the Reaſon why the Apoſtle wiſhed to have thoſe falſe Teachers *cut off* from the Communion of Chriſtians, *viz.* to prevent the Contagion ſpreading farther. I am aware, that ſome very learned Men [d] diſlike the Interpretation I have mentioned, but upon a very ſlender Reaſon, as to me appears. They think the Apoſtle would not have *wiſhed* for it only, but would have *commanded* it in Virtue of his *Apoſtolical* Authority. It is true, he might have done it: But who knows for how many, or for what *prudential* Reaſons, he might forbear for a Time, and be content at that Juncture, only to throw out a Wiſh, in order to prepare the *Galatians* for it, and to incline them by ſlow and gentle Methods, to concur the more readily with it, when it ſhould be abſolutely neceſſary. It is not to be preſumed, that *Excommunication*, or a formal renouncing of Communion, are things to be precipitated at all Adventures, or

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[a] Gal. v. 10. [b] Gal. v. 12.
[c] Gal. v. 9. compare 1 Cor. v. 6, 7.
[d] *Elſner* in loc. p. 196. *Buddæus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 808. *Wolfius* Curæ philolog. & Crit. Vol. II. p. 772.

that

CHAP. IV. that there may not often be good Reaſons for Delay, that ſo an Affair of the higheſt Conſequence may be conducted with the utmoſt Prudence. I am of Opinion, that beſides the miſchievous Nature of the Hereſy itſelf, ſeveral other Circumſtances of Time, Place and Perſons, ought to have their Weight in Conſultations relating to Church Diſcipline upon Offenders. But I paſs on.

St. *Paul* gives Advice to *Timothy*, in the Words here following, *Theſe things teach and exhort. If any Man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholſome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs, he is proud,* &c. *——From ſuch withdraw thy ſelf*[a]. Perhaps the Rendring and the Senſe would run better thus: [b] *If any Man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to the wholſome Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs,* if he is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doating *about Queſtions,* &c. *from ſuch withdraw thy ſelf.* It is a diſputable Point, what particular Sect, or Set of falſe Teachers, the Apoſtle here refers to, whether *Judaizers* or *Gnoſticks*, or others diſtinct from both. But one thing is plain, which is ſufficient to our preſent Purpoſe, that the Apoſtle exhorts *Timothy* to *withraw* from them, and that in order either to diſcountenance their falſe Doctrines, or to preſerve himſelf and others from

[a] 1 Tim. vi. 2——5.
[b] Vid. *Vitringa* Obſervat. Sacr. Tom. I. p. 220.

receiving

receiving Contagion by them. To the ſame Purpoſe is what the Apoſtle again ſays to *Timothy*: CHAP. IV.

Shun profane and vain Babbling, for they will increaſe unto more Ungodlineſs; and the Word will eat as doth a Canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the Truth, have erred, ſaying, that the Reſurrection is paſt already, and overthrow the Faith of ſome[a]. The Heads and Patrons of the Hereſy here mentioned, the Apoſtle had *excommunicated* before, delivering them over unto *Satan*, to ſtop their blaſpheming[b]. They appear to have been Perſons who believed the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, but miſinterpreted them, *allegoriſing* away the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*, reſolving it all into Figure and Metaphor[c]. The *delivering* over *unto Satan*, ſeems to have been a Form of Excommunication, declaring the Perſon reduced to the State of an *Heathen*: And in the *Apoſtolical* Age, it was accompanied with *ſupernatural* or miraculous Effects upon the Bodies of the Perſons ſo delivered[d]: Tho' it may be ſuppoſed that ſuch Effects might laſt beyond the Apoſtolick Age, becauſe other *miraculous* Gifts certainly did ſo. I am well aware of the Diſputes which have been among Perſons of the beſt Learning[e], about the

[a] 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 18. [b] 1 Tim i. 20.

[c] *Vid. Vitringa* Obſerv. ſacr. l. iv. c ix. p. 925.
Buddæus Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 300.

[d] 1 Cor. v. 5. ſee Commentators.

[e] A ſummary Account of them may be ſeen in *Wolfius*'s *Curæ*

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the preciſe Meaning of the Phraſe, whether it ſignified *Excommunication*, or an Appendage to it. I have choſen that Interpretation which appears moſt probable [a]. I muſt own, there is a Notion which appears to run through the Debates of ſeveral learned Men on this Head, and which I cannot well underſtand. They ſeem to take it for granted, that Excommunication is a *Puniſhment of the Soul.* I eaſily conceive it to be a *ſpiritual* Puniſhment, as not being a *corporal* one, and as inflicted by a *ſpiritual*, that is, eccleſiaſtical Authority: But how it is properly a Puniſhment of the *Soul*, I apprehend not. It's Deſign is *ſalutary*, and the Effect alſo often *ſalutary*; ſo that it is rather *medicinal* than *penal*, with reſpect to the *Soul:* But this by the way only. It would be too large a Digreſſion here, to conſider that Point in ſuch a manner as it deſerves to be conſidered.

I go on to other Texts, and ſhall take one by the way, which tho' not preciſely to the Point I am upon, yet is not altogether foreign. *There are many unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers, eſpecially they of the Circumciſion; whoſe Mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole Houſes, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy Lucre's ſake—— Rebuke them ſharply, that they may be ſound in the Faith* [b]. We may here

Curæ. Philolog. & Crit. ad 1 Cor. v. 5. p. 367. or in *Bingham's* Eccleſ. Antiq. B. XVI. c. ii. Sect. 15.

[a] See Biſhop *Potter's* Church Government, p. 371, *&c.* Dr. *Rogers's* Review of a Diſcourſe of the Viſible, *&c.* p. 392.

[b] Tit. i. 10, 11, 13.

obſerve

obſerve the ardent Zeal of the Apoſtle againſt falſe Teachers, who corrupted the *Faith*, and how great a Streſs he lays upon being *ſound* in Principles. But he does not give Orders for Excommunicating thoſe *Deceivers* directly, but to *admoniſh* them firſt, and that with ſome ſharpneſs, in order to ſhame them, and ſilence them, and bring them back to the true Faith. From all which one may collect theſe following Conſiderations, which may be of ſome Uſe to us: 1. That Religion is not a *perſonal* Thing, which every Man may new model, or alter for himſelf, without *Rebuke* from his fellow *Chriſtians*, or from the Governours of the Church. It is the joint Patrimony of the whole Community, and every Man more or leſs is accountable to his Neighbour for any *Waſte* made in it. It is the *common Concern*, and every one in his Station and Degree, muſt give a helping Hand to preſerve it in its Native Purity. 2. That the teaching and propagating of *falſe* Doctrines, may ſubvert *whole Houſes*, and do a great deal of Miſchief: So that *Truth* is not always a gainer by unreſtrain'd Liberties of that kind. 3. That *ſharp* Rebukes are very proper in ſuch Caſes, and are no Breaches of Charity, but the trueſt Inſtances of brotherly Affection and Love. 4. That *Admonitions* and *Increpations* ſhould firſt be tried, even in caſe of great Corruption in Doctrine, rather than come to Extremities at once: A rule expreſly taught us, in what I am next going to cite.

CHAP. IV.

A Man that is an Heretick, after the firſt and ſecond Admonition, reject; knowing that he that is ſuch, is ſubverted, and ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf[a]. This Text will deſerve a more particular Examination, containing much in it directly belonging to the Point in hand. Wherefore I ſhall handle the ſeveral Parts of it the more diſtinctly. 1. *A Man that is an Heretick.* Here the firſt Queſtion is, who, or what is an *Heretick?* To which I anſwer in the general, not every one that miſtakes in Judgment, tho' in Matters of great *Importance*, in Points *fundamental*, but he that openly *eſpouſes* ſuch fundamental Error. That I take to be the true and full Notion of an *Heretick*, according to the Scripture Idea of it. Dr. *Whitby* adds to the Definition, the eſpouſing it *out of Diſguſt, Pride, Envy*, or ſome *worldly Principle*[b], and *againſt his Conſcience*[c]. Indeed that may generally be the Caſe, but that thoſe ſeveral Particulars are neceſſary to the Definition of *Heretick*, is not to be allowed him by any means, for the Reaſons here following.

1. By that Rule, there would be no certain knowing, in moſt Caſes, who is an *Heretick*, or who not, ſince there is no looking into the *Heart*: And how then could we at all obſerve the Scripture Rule of *avoiding* or *rejecting* Hereticks?

[a] Tit. iii. 10, 11. [b] *Whitby* on Gal. v. 19.
[c] *Whitby* on Tit. iii. 10.

2. There

2. There is as much *Danger*, or *more*, when a blind *Enthuſiaſt*, or any Perſon of *invincible* Ignorance or Prejudice, eſpouſes *falſe* Doctrines, and *corrupts* the Faith, as when evil-minded Men do the ſame thing out of *Envy*, *Pride*, &c. and *againſt* their own *Conſciences*: And what ſhall be done in ſuch Caſes? The way certainly is, to cenſure the Doctrine as *Hereſy*, and to do all that *Prudence* and *Charity* preſcribes for the preventing ſuch well meaning, but mad Teachers, from ſeducing the Flock of Chriſt. It is not poſſible for Men accurately to diſtinguiſh one Caſe from the other; and therefore one general Rule muſt ſerve for both. God will diſtinguiſh at the laſt Day. In the mean time, all proper Care muſt be taken to guard againſt the threatning Miſchief. For the *Poiſon* of the Doctrine, by whomſoever ſpread, or upon whatſoever Principle, is juſt the ſame; only, if it comes from a Man otherwiſe honeſt, pious, ſober, &c. it is likely to inſinuate itſelf deeper, and ſpread the wider. I ſay then, *Hereſy* lies in *eſpouſing pernicious Doctrines*: That we can judge of, and by that Rule, can underſtand how to proceed. The other way involves all in Darkneſs, and leaves a Matter of the greateſt Conſequence to the utmoſt uncertainty. But let us examine what the learned Author before mentioned had to plead in behalf of his Notion. The Strength of all lies chiefly in the Word αὐτοκατάκριτος, *ſelf-condemned*, here uſed by the *Apoſtle*; as if no

CHAP. IV. Man could be an *Heretick* that is not *ſelf-condemned*, or does not go againſt his own *Judgment* and *Conſcience*. But I obſerve, that the Apoſtle directs *Titus* to admoniſh a *Heretick* once and again. It is ſuppoſed, that *Titus* might know a *Heretick*, viz. by his eſpouſing ſome Doctrine ſubverſive of the Goſpel: For how could it be certainly known, whether the Man *believed himſelf*, or taught *contrary* to his own *Judgment?* If after being twice *Admoniſhed* for teaching ſuch pernicious Doctrine, he ſhould ſtill perſiſt, then he was to be look'd upon as αὐτοκατάκριτος, *ſelf-condemned*. It could no longer be pure *Ignorance* or *Thoughtleſneſs*, after two ſeveral Warnings, but muſt now be look'd upon as Matter of his own Choice or Election[a], as meer *Wilfulneſs* and *Obſtinacy* for him to perſiſt in Oppoſition to the *Truth*. When I ſay againſt the *Truth*, I ſuppoſe that to have been a clear Caſe to the Admoniſher before the *firſt Admonition*, otherwiſe there had not been room for Admonition at all. Admoniſh *a Man that is an Heretick*; not a Man that is really no Heretick, which would be contumelious and injurious. And if he perſiſts after two Admonitions, then look upon him as αὐτοκατάκριτος, ſelf-condemned, and *reject* him. It is plain enough from the whole Tenor of this Paſſage, that αὐτοκατάκριτος, whatever it means, does not belong to the Defini-

[a] Ideo & *ſibi damnatum* dixit *Hæreticum*, quia & in quo damnatur ſibi elegit, *Tertul.* de Preſcript. Hæret. Cap. 6.

tion

tion of an *Heretick* as ſuch, but to that of an *admoniſhed* and ſtill *obſtinate* Heretick. He is ſuppoſed a *Heretick* before, and therefore was to be *admoniſhed* once, if need ſhould be again: And then, if he perſiſted, he was to be looked upon as *deſperate* and incorrigible; and therefore to be *rejected* utterly [a]. There is indeed ſomething elliptical in the Sentence: *Knowing that he that is ſuch*; as much as to ſay, knowing that he who continues ſuch *after two Admonitions*, is now *without Excuſe* [b], and as it were, paſſes Sentence upon *himſelf*, either as voluntarily *cutting* himſelf *off* from the Church, by an open Revolt [c], or as rendering himſelf *uncapable* of the Privileges and Bleſſings that belong to it, by renouncing its *Faith*; which, in a juſt Conſtruction, is *judging*, or declaring himſelf *unworthy* [d] of the

[a] Quare autem poſt primam & ſecundam correptionem *devitandus* ſit, reddit cauſas, dicens: quod *ſubverſus eſt ejuſmodi, & peccat, quum ſit a ſemetipſo damnatus.* Qui enim ſemel biſque correptus, audito errore ſuo, non vult corrigi, errare exiſtimat corrigentem: & e contrario ſe ad pugnas & jurgia verborum parans, eum vult *lucrifacere* a quo docetur. *Hieron.* in loc. Vol. iv. p. 439.

[b] ἀναπολόγητος. *See* Suicer. Theſaur. in ἀυτοκατάκριτος.

[c] Hic enim *reus ſibi* erit, qui non ab Epiſcopo ejectus, ſed ſponte de eccleſia profugus, & hæretica preſumptione a *ſemetipſo* damnatus, *Cypr.* Epiſ. LXIX. p. 182. edit. Ox.

Propterea vero *a ſemetipſo* dicitur eſſe *damnatus*; quia Fornicator, Adulter, Homicida, & cætera vitia per Sacerdotes de Eccleſia propelluntur: *Hæretici* autem in *ſemetipſos* ſententiam ferunt, ſuo arbitrio de Eccleſia recidentes: Quæ receſſio, propriæ conſcientiæ videtur eſſe damnatio. *Hieronym.* in loc. p. 439. Compare *Hammond* upon the Text.

[d] *See* Acts xiii. 46. ſo *Irenæus*—— eſt *a ſemetipſo damnatus*, reſiſtens & repugnans ſaluti ſuæ quod faciunt omnes Hæretici. Iren. adver. Hær. l. iii. c. 1. p. 174. *Maſſvet.*

CHAP. IV. Bleſſings tendered. I have been the longer in explaining this Text; becauſe the real meaning and purport of it has been frequently miſunderſtood, or miſrepreſented. Now I return to Dr. *Whitby*.

He pleads, that, "That the Apoſtle ſaith "not to *Titus*, do thou *convince* or inform "him of his *Error*, but do thou *admoniſh* him "of his Fault: which ſhews, that the Crime "lay not in his *Head* or his *miſtaken Judg-* "*ment* (for that can never be corrected by "*Admonition*, but only by *Inſtruction*) but "that it lay in the Irregularity of his Affecti- "ons, and the Perverſeneſs of his Will [a]. But what if the Fault lay in *Heart* and *Head* both, as indeed all *Faults* do? *omnis peccans ignorat*, is a true Maxim. There is ſome Error always in *Judgment*, before there is an Error in *Practice*; for Evil, *as Evil*, cannot be choſen. The Fault therefore of an *Heretick*, really ſuch, is, that ſome corrupt Affection (I except the Caſe of *invincible* Infirmity) miſleads him firſt to paſs a *raſh* precipitate Judgment; and next to *eſpouſe* that Judgment openly. And laſtly, (if he proceeds ſo far) to *perſiſt* in it againſt all Advices or Admonitions to the contrary. The *Heart* perverts the *Head*; and both conſpire in the ſame falſe Judgment and Conduct. The good Doctor pleads farther: "No Man who acts according to his "Judgment, how erroneous ſoever it may be, "is *ſelf-condemned* in that Action [b]. Yes, if

[a] Whitby on Tit. iii. 10. [b] Whitby, ibid.

he

he made a *raſh* Judgment, and *might* have known or done *better*, he is *ſelf-condemned*: For he condemns others who judge *raſhly* and *wrongly*, when they might and ought to have judged better; and ſo of Courſe he *condemns himſelf*, by the ſame Sentence[a]. There are two kinds of *Self-condemnation*, one *direct* and *explicite*, the other *indirect*, *implicite*, *virtual*, *conſequential*. As to *direct* Self-condemnation, few fall into it: for Men are ſo *partial* towards their own Failings, that they ſeldom ſee their own *falſe* Judgment, or *wrong* Conduct, and as ſeldom *condemn themſelves* for either. It is their Fault that they do not: ſuch *Self-condemnation* would be commendable, and a good ſtep towards Recovery: It is not ſuch *Self-condemnation*, as that that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of. There is too little of it every where; *Preſumption* and *Self-applauſe*. are the Foibles of Mankind. And they will eaſily take care in moſt Caſes, not to be *ſelf-condemned*, tho' condemned by all the World beſides. It is not *Self-condemnation* in this Senſe, that makes an ill Man, or aggravates a Fault, but the want of it[b]. The other kind of *Self-condemnation*, which I call *indirect*, is what the Apoſtle may point to as an aggravating Circumſtance of *Hereſy*, after two Admonitions. The Man *juſtifies* himſelf in Oppoſition to *Truth* and *good Counſel*, does not *condemn* him-

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[a] See Rom. ii. 1.

[b] See *Hammond* upon the Text.

CHAP. IV. ſelf *directly*, when he ought to do it, and amend: But he condemns himſelf *indirectly*, as acting againſt the *Law of his Mind*, againſt that general Law, by which he *condemns* others, and juſtly, whenever they allow themſelves in *wrong* things, and *ought* to know better. This is his Condemnation, that he approves in a particular Inſtance through *Partiality*, what himſelf in the general condemns. All *Sinners*, in this Senſe, are *ſelf-condemned*; and ſo are *Hereticks* alſo among the reſt. Indeed, all that do not make a proper uſe of their *rational* Faculties, when they may and ought to do it, are thus *ſelf-condemned*: And their own awaken'd Conſciences will riſe up againſt them, at the laſt Day, as Men guilty of great Prevarication and *Self-repugnancy*, for allowing in *themſelves*, what they otherwiſe diſallow and condemn. *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant*, will then be the Sentence due to all, who having been *twice* admoniſhed, of *corrupting* the Faith, repented not of it, but perſevered in their Errors both of *Judgment* and *Practice*, when they might have known better.

I defined *Hereſy* not merely a *Miſtake of Judgment* (tho' in Fundamentals) but *eſpouſing* ſuch erroneous Judgment, either teaching and diſſeminating it, or openly ſupporting and aſſiſting thoſe that do, ſiding with them in it. This I conceive to be the true Scripture-Notion of *Hereſy* [a]. Nevertheleſs,

[a] 1 Cor. xi. 19. Gal. v. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

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an *erroneous Judgment* in Fundamentals, has more commonly paſſed under the Name of *Hereſy*, and is undoubtedly a great *Fault*, whatever Name we call it by. It is running counter to all thoſe Texts, which recommend *Zeal* and *Earneſtneſs* for the *true* Faith: For how can a Man *conſiſtently* with himſelf, be zealous for what he either *disbelieves*, or aſſents not to? It is likewiſe running croſs to all thoſe Texts which exhort to *ſound Faith*, or which command us to *hold faſt what is good*, or forbid the being *toſſed to and fro* with every *Wind of Doctrine*, and the like. Whether ſuch Fault ſhall be called *Hereſy* or no, is only diſputing about a Name: But that it is in itſelf (particular Circumſtances excepted) a great Offence againſt God, cannot be doubted; and it naturally leads to worſe.

2. Having largely treated of the Nature and Notion of *Hereſy*, and what properly denominates any Man a *Heretick*, I am next to ſay ſomething of what is meant by *rejecting* ſuch Perſons. After all prudent and proper means have been uſed to *reclaim* them, or *ſilence* them, and they ſtill perſiſt in their *Hereſy*, either teaching, or otherwiſe eſpouſing falſe and pernicious Doctrines; then the Rule of the Apoſtle is to reject them, or caſt them off, if they have not before caſt off themſelves. The Text does not ſay, *excommunicate* them; for that would not be neceſſary, when they have excommunicated themſelves: But it ſays, *ſhun* them, *avoid* them, *reject* them;

them; which, in caſe they do not caſt themſelves out, implies and infers a Command to *exclude* them: So that the Text, by that *general* Expreſſion, ſeems to have provided for both the Caſes.

But I muſt here again take notice of Dr. *Whitby*'s Miſtakes, and falſe Reaſonings. He was ſenſible, that according to his looſe Definition of *Hereſy*, there would be no knowing, for the moſt part, who is guilty of it, or who ought to be condemned for it: He produces the Objection himſelf, and afterwards endeavours lamely to anſwer it. "It is objected, "ſays he, that there be few who oppoſe the "Truth *wittingly*, and they are only *known* "*to God*, not to the Church; which there"fore cannot *admoniſh*, *avoid*, or *excommuni*"*cate* them [a]. An inſuperable Objection againſt his Notion, ſhewing that it terminates in a flat Contradiction to *Scripture*, and to the plaineſt Reaſon. Well, how does he reply to it? The Sum of his Anſwer is, "That *Ti*"*tus* might have the *diſcerning of Spirits*, a "Gift belonging to thoſe Times: And the "Church that was in the Days of the Apo"ſtles, could eaſily know, whether the Doc"trines which others taught in Oppoſition to "them, were indeed Doctrines received from "the Apoſtles or not: If they were not, they "who taught them muſt know, they receiv"ed no ſuch Doctrine from them, and ſo "muſt be *ſelf-condemned* in teaching it as re-

[a] *Whitby* on Tit. iii. 10.

"ceived

" ceived from them, or as the Faith once de- CHAP. IV.
" livered to the Saints [b]. Never was there
a looſer Reply, in ſo momentous a Cauſe. For,
1. This amounts to ſaying, that all the Pre-
cepts about *admoniſhing*, *avoiding*, or *excom-
municating* of Hereticks, and of Conſequence,
all the other Precepts about preſerving *ſound*
Doctrine, or *contending* earneſtly for the Faith,
expired in a great Meaſure as ſoon as the mi-
raculous Gifts, or Gift of *diſcerning Spirits*
ceaſed. The Precepts from that Time fore-
wards, became impracticable, becauſe no Bo-
dy now could know what was *Hereſy*, or who
Hereticks, ſince they could not ſee into Men's
Hearts. Tho' Hereticks might *ſubvert whole
Houſes* (and now more than ever, when there
ſhould be no *Apoſtle* living to controul them)
and tho' their *Words might eat as doth a Canker*;
yet the Church is left without Remedy: The
Paſtors and Guardians of it muſt not preſume
to *excommunicate*, or *avoid*, or *admoniſh* Per-
ſons as *Hereticks*, unleſs they can firſt prove
them *Hereticks* or *ill-deſigning* Men: But if it
be certain, that they are led by an *erroneous
Conſcience*, they muſt not be *cenſured* at all,
but treated as good Men and Fellow-Chriſti-
ans. " So that we are commanded to *avoid*
" a *Heretick*; but this *Heretick* is ſuch a ſort
" of a Creature as no body can ever find out,
" or diſtinguiſh from one he is to *treat as a Bro-
" ther*. But ſuppoſe this *Heretick* ſhould tell
" us, that he *did not believe what himſelf af-*

[b] *Whitby* on Tit. iii. 10.

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" *firmed*, then indeed he would be *ſelf-con-*
" *demned*, and we might know it: But he
" muſt be a Fool of a *Heretick* who would
" declare this, unleſs he intended to *recant*
" and *renounce* his *Errors*: And whenever he
" did this, he would no longer be a *Heretick*,
" no longer to be *avoided*; and therefore being
" *ſelf-condemned* in this Senſe, would be ſo far
" from a Reaſon why we ſhould *avoid* him,
" that it would be a Reaſon why we ſhould
" *not avoid* him: but *treat him as a Brother*[a].

2. From the ſame Principles it will follow, that the whole *Diſcipline* of the Church, after the Time that the Gift of *diſcerning of Spirits* ceaſed, ſo far as concerned *Hereticks*, was raſh and unwarrantable: which no wiſe Man will preſume to ſay or think. 3. It farther follows, that be *Hereſies* ever ſo rife, and the *Faith* ever ſo much endangered, there is no Remedy for it: We cannot *know* in theſe Times (tho' the Scriptures are allowed to be *clear* and *perfect*) what the Doctrines of the Apoſtles were, or *whether the Doctrines which others teach in Oppoſition to them, are indeed Doctrines received from the Apoſtles*, or *not*: However, if we may know that, yet without knowing Men's *Hearts* too, all our *Zeal* for the ancient Faith is fruitleſs and vain.

Such are the Abſurdities which the learned Doctor inevitably runs into, only for the ſake of a falſe Favourite Notion he had unwarily

[a] *Roger*'s Review of the viſible and inviſible Church, p. 409.

imbibed.

imbibed. The Truth of the whole Matter is, we have nothing to do with the *inward* Motives or Views of Hereticks. The *Miſchief* lies in the *falſe Doctrines* which they teach and propagate: And upon that account, and that only, they are to be *admoniſhed, avoided, cenſured*, in order to prevent the *ſubverting whole Houſes*, and the like. Poſſibly ſuch falſe Teachers may *intend well:* of that God is Judge: But the *Faith* of *Chriſt*, and the *Salvation* of Souls, muſt not be ſacrificed even to the known *good Intentions* of any Man, or Men whatever; no, nor to the preaching even of an *Angel from Heaven*, were it a poſſible Suppoſition. But it may be objected; what, muſt *innocent* Men ſuffer for the ſake of any Good? Is that *Juſtice* or *Equity?* I anſwer, that they are *innocent* in this Caſe, through an *erroneous Conſcience*, and *invincible* Ignorance, is more than Man knows or can know: of that God is Judge. But that *corrupting* the *Faith* is not an *innocent* Practice, (conſidered in it ſelf) but a very *ill thing*, every one knows, or ought to know; and that is the Rule for *Men* to go by in judging, becauſe they can go by no other; and it is in the main both a ſafe and a certain Rule. And if it may ſometimes happen, that diſcerning and upright Judges may condemn a Man who is *innocent* in God's Sight, (becauſe of ſome *unconquerable* Infirmity) while *guilty* in the Eyes of Man, this cannot be remedied. The good Proceeding from ſuch *Cenſures*, vaſtly overballances it.

CHAP. IV. And what if after all, *ſpiritual* Cenſures (for of ſuch only I am ſpeaking) ſhould happen to fall upon ſuch a Perſon, he may be in ſome meaſure hurt in his *Reputation* by it, and that is all: And poſſibly hereupon his Errors before *invincible* through Ignorance, may be removed by wholſome *Inſtruction* and *Admonitions*, and ſo he is befriended in it, and may now come to have a Covenant Right to Happineſs, who before ſtood only in *uncovenanted Mercy*. For tho' God will *condemn* no Man for what he could not help; yet he has *promiſed* no Man a Reward who ever ſo *ignorantly* corrupts the *Faith* of the Goſpel. But it is ſaid of the Unlearned and *Unſtable*, that when they *wreſt* the *Scriptures*, it is to their own *Deſtruction*. I have dwelt the longer upon this Argument, becauſe it appears to me to be a very weighty Affair, and not ſo well conſidered by many, as it ought to be. I now proceed in order to ſome other *Texts*, relating to the *avoiding* Hereticks.

St. *John's* Advice in that Caſe, touch'd upon before, is, *If there come any one unto you, and bring not this Doctrine*, (the Doctrine of Chriſt in a material Article) *receive him not into your Houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed: For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is Partaker of his evil Deeds*[a]. The Apoſtle here forbids a Chriſtian to *ſalute*[b] a Man, that perverts the Goſpel in ſuch a certain Article, being a *fundamental* one: What Article he ſpoke of, I

[a] 2 John 10, 11. [b] χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε.

have

have intimated above. It is obſerved by Interpreters, that denying a Perſon the common Forms of *Salutation*, was the ſame with looking upon him as *excommunicate*[a]. And ſo theſe Words of the Apoſtle carry in them the Force of an Excommunication, with reſpect to the *Hereticks* there pointed to, and the Force of a Prohibition, with reſpect to other Chriſtians, who are hereby forbidden to receive ſuch *Hereticks* into their Houſes, or to pay them ſo much as common Civilities. This Precept of the Apoſtle may be further illuſtrated by his own Practice, recorded by *Irenæus*, who had the Information at ſecond hand from *Polycarp* a Diſciple of St. *John*'s; that St. *John* once meeting with *Cerinthus* at the *Bath*, retired inſtantly without bathing; for fear, ſaid he, leſt the Bath ſhould fall, by reaſon of *Cerinthus*'s being there, the *Enemy to Truth*[b]. The like Story is there alſo told of *Polycarp* himſelf, with regard to another ſuch *Heretick*, namely *Marcion*. And *Irenæus*'s juſt Reflection upon the whole, is very obſervable in theſe Words: *So extremely cautious were the Apoſtles and their Followers, to have no Communication, no not ſo much as in Diſcourſe with any Man that adulterated the* CHAP. IV.

[a] See *Hammond* and *Whitby*.

[b] Καὶ τινὲς δὲ ἀκηκοότες αὐτοῦ, ὅτι Ἰωάννης, ἀτῦ κυρίε μαθητὴς ἐν τῇ ἐφέσῳ πορευθεὶς λοῦσθαι, καὶ ἰδὼν ἔσω κήρινθον, ἐξήλατο τῦ βαλανείε, μὴ λοσάμενος, ἀλλ' ἐπειπὼν. Φύγωμεν, μὴ καὶ τὸ βαλανεῖον συμπέσῃ, ἔνδον ὄντος κηρίνθε τῦ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐχθρῦ.

Irenæ. l. iii. c. 3. p. 177. *Bened.* alias. 204. Grab.

Conf. Euſeb. Eccl. H. l. iii. c. 28. p. 123. Theodoret. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 3. p. 220.

Truth.

CHAP. IV. *Truth*[b]. A Conduct, which, as he remarks, was conformable to St. *Paul*'s Rule, *Tit.* iii. 10. The Reader will take notice by the way, that tho' *Cerinthus* and *Marcion* might be otherwiſe ill Men, and might perhaps act upon *bad Motives*, yet the Streſs of the Thing lay not there; but it was their being *Enemies* to *Truth*, and their *adulterating the Truth*, (in Points fundamental) which made them ſo abhorred, and their Company ſo deteſted by wiſe and holy Men. No matter what their *Motives* were, or their *Morals* in other Reſpects: They *corrupted* the *Faith* of Chriſt, and in effect, *ſubverted* the *Goſpel*: That was enough to render them deteſtable in the Eyes of all Men who ſincerely loved and valued *ſound* Faith.

The Biſhops of *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* are reproved by our Lord for *ſuffering*, that is, for not ejecting the *Balaamites* or *Nicolaitans*, who taught falſe Doctrine, relating to the Fundamentals of Chriſtian *Practice*: They taught the Lawfulneſs of *Fornication*, and of *eating things offered to Idols*. That was a Hereſy in Doctrinals, immediately affecting the *Agenda* of Chriſtianity, the *moral* Commands of *Scripture*; which they very probably miſinterpreted and perverted, much after the ſame manner as others perverted ſuch Texts as contain the *Credenda*, Matters of *Faith* ſtrictly ſo cal-

[b] Τοσαύτην οἱ Ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτῶν ἴσχυν ἐυλάβειαν, πρὸς τὸ μηδὲ μιχρὶ λόγῳ κοινωνεῖν, τινὶ τῶν παραχαραττόντων τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ὡς καὶ Παῦλος ἔφησεν· αἱρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον. κ. τ. λ. Iren. ibid.

led.

led. There is not much Difference in the main, between the two Caſes; excepting that one is more *groſs* and *ſcandalous*, and ſhews itſelf in more *ſenſible* Effects. There is the ſame preſumptuous tampering with *Scripture*, the ſame kind of *artificial* Eluſions, the like wire-drawing of *Texts*, in both Caſes: And there is likewiſe the ſame kind of *Unbelief* or *Disbelief* of *God*'s ſacred Word, only in different Articles, and the like Oppoſition to *Goſpel Truths*, only to different Purpoſes. If any Man thro' mere *weakneſs of Judgment* ſhould have imbibed the Doctrine of the *Nicolaitans*, but reſolving at the ſame Time never to divulge it, nor practiſe upon it, I ſee not what Harm a bare Opinion, and owing only to Infirmity, would do him, while dormant, and without Effect. But if any Perſon, thro' the like Weakneſs of Judgment, ſhould entertain low and degrading Notions of his God and Saviour, tho' he ſhould never divulge it, he would ſuffer ſome Harm by it with Reſpect to his *religious* Services, which would be thereby rendered *leſs Perfect*. For in that Caſe, the *ill Effect* ſo far, is inſeparable from the *falſe Opinion*; tho' I doubt not but all merciful Allowances would be made for it. But as the *criminal* Part in the former Caſe, would lie chiefly in *practiſing* upon the Perſuaſion, or in *divulging* it to the Hurt of other Perſons, ſo in this latter alſo, the moſt criminal Circumſtance would be the *eſpouſing* and publickly *ſupporting* ſuch falſe Perſuaſion

CHAP. IV. to the Detriment of Religion. For if he who ſhall break one of the *leaſt moral Commandments*, and ſhall *teach Men ſo*, ſhall be called *leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, (*Matt.* v. 19.) it muſt be a very dangerous Experiment for any Man to preſume to *teach* any thing contrary to the Goſpel of Chriſt in the *main* Articles of *Faith*, or *Doctrine*, becauſe, the *Chriſtian Life* is nearly concerned in both, and the Honour of God and Religion are bound up with them. And the Paſtors or Guardians of the Chriſtian Religion ought no more to *ſuffer* any notorious Inſults upon the great *Credenda* of our moſt holy Religion, than upon the *Agenda*: Since Both reſt upon the ſame Foundation, have a cloſe Connexion with each other, and are, for the moſt part, likely to ſtand or fall together.

II. I have now proved from direct Scripture-Texts that it is the Duty of Chriſtians to refuſe Communion with thoſe who corrupt the Faith of Chriſt in Points *fundamental*, and perſiſt in ſo doing, after proper Cautions and Admonitions given them. I am in the next place to inforce the Doctrine yet farther by Conſiderations drawn from the very Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, upon Scripture Principles. *Piety* towards God, *Charity* towards other Men, and *Juſtice* towards our own Souls, all conſpire to recommend and authorize ſuch Conduct.

1. I ſay, *Piety towards God* requires ſuch a Conduct. For can it be thought, that when

the high Lord and Governour of the Univerſe vouchſafes to ſpeak to us from Heaven, and to reveal Truths of *Importance*, that good Men ought patiently to bear the perverting of thoſe ſacred Truths, or the adulterating of thoſe heavenly Inſtructions. Earthly governours would reſent the putting *falſe* Conſtructions upon their Laws or Edicts, or the *wreſting* them to quite different Purpoſe from what they were intended for, to deceive, and miſlead their People: How much more ſhall the God of Heaven reſent any Indignities of that Kind? It is the Cauſe of God and Religion, to reſcue the Word of God from perverſe Gloſſes and Comments, and to preſerve it in its native *Purity* and Perfection. To admit thoſe who corrupt and deprave its Senſe in any groſs Manner, to the common Honours and Privileges of Fellow-Chriſtians, would be the ready way to introduce all imaginable *Confuſion* in Faith and Worſhip, and to *deface* Chriſtianity to ſuch a Degree, that common Chriſtians at leaſt could not know how or where to find it. For Example: Had the *Cerinthians*, *Ebionites*, *Marcionites*, *Valentinians*, *Manichees*, and other Sects, too numerous to mention, been all admitted as *Fellow-Chriſtians*, Chriſtianity muſt have been looked upon as the moſt uncertain, unconſtant, inconſiſtent Thing in the World: And both the Religion it ſelf, and the Scriptures which contain it, would very probably have been loſt before now, or have come down to us ſo mangled,

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adulterated, diſguiſed, that no one could know what to depend upon as true and ſincere, either as to Words, or Senſe. The diſcriminating of Hereticks from faithful Chriſtians, and therewith preſerving the *Unity* of the Church, and the *Purity* of Doctrine, has been a principal Means of fixing the Chriſtian Religion in its moſt material Articles, and of ſupporting the *Honour* of it, againſt all its Enemies without, whether *Jews*, *Pagans*, or mere *Infidels*. So neceſſary was it to diſcountenance all Attempts for ſubverting or perverting the Truth as it was in Chriſt Jeſus, and to ſeparate the *Clean* from the *Unclean*, by rejecting Hereticks, as unworthy of Chriſtian Communion, or even of the Name of Chriſtians, except it were in a very large Senſe.

2. As *Piety* towards God, and *Reverence* towards his ſacred Word required ſuch Conduct; ſo likewiſe did *Charity* towards Men: Charity towards the *Offenders*, and Charity towards all Mankind. It was a *charitable* Office towards the Corruptors of the Faith of Chriſt, to reject and diſown them, in order to make them *aſhamed*[a], and to bring them to Repentance, that ſo their Souls *might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus*[b]. It is true, that it often failed of having this *ſalutary* Effect, as the Judgments of God alſo often fail, and where they do not cure, they irritate and harden, and render worſe, which is no Argument

[a] 2 Theſſ. iii. 14. [b] 1 Cor. v. 5.

gument againſt the *ſalutary* Nature of the Remedy, but ſhows only the incurable Diſorder of the Patient. Indeed, St. *Paul* does diſtinguiſh his coming *with* the *Rod* of Excommunication, from his coming in *Love and in the Spirit of Meekneſs*[a]: Not as if ſuch Diſcipline were not an Inſtance of *Love*, or were not perfectly conſiſtent with a *Spirit of Meekneſs*, but it was not Love in every View, or in every Senſe of the Word, like the Love ſhown towards the *Faithful* in all the outward Expreſſions of Approbation and Friendlineſs; for the Caſe did not admit of it. It was Love mingled with *wholeſome Severity*, the truer Love for being ſo mingled, when the Neceſſity of the Caſe required it: *Wounds* they were, but of a *Friend* ſtill, and in a Caſe where the *kindeſt* of Friends could not otherwiſe ſhow themſelves kinder than by ſo doing. *Meekneſs* it was not, under that preciſe Formality, but conſiſtent with all that could be called *Chriſtian Meekneſs:* For to forbear *Sharpneſs* and Severity, in ſuch a Caſe, is not *Meekneſs*, but *Tameneſs*, and a *Laodicean* Lukewarmneſs. So that the Exerciſe of proper Diſcipline, in ſuch Inſtances, is in Reality fervent *Love* and *Charity* towards the Offenders themſelves, in a *ſpiritual* View, but expreſſing it ſelf in the harſher Way, the only Way left for it towards Men in their Circumſtances. *Palliating* Medicines would be *cruel* and *barbarous* Applications, when *Corroſives* CHAP. IV.

[a] 1 Cor. iv. 21.

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are the only Means left to recover the Patient, and to effect the Cure[a]. Upon the whole therefore, *Charity* towards the *Offenders* themſelves, requires ſuch a Conduct as I have been mentioning.

There can be leſs Appearance for any Queſtion, whether it be not alſo *Charity* towards all Men beſides. It is Charity towards the *Ignorant*, as carrying *Inſtruction* along with it; Charity towards the *Unwary*, as giving them *Warning* to ſtand off from Infection; Charity towards the *confirmed* Chriſtians, as encouraging them ſtill more, and preſerving them from Inſults; Charity towards the *whole Church*, as ſupporting both their *Unity* and *Purity*; Charity towards *all Mankind*, towards them that are *without*, as it is recommending pure Religion to them, in the moſt advantagious Light, obviating their moſt plauſible Calumnies, and giving them leſs occaſion to *blaſpheme*.

3. I obſerve, in the third place, that *Juſtice* to our own Souls requires, that we uſe all prudent and proper Endeavours to diſcountenance *Hereſies* by refuſing Communion with their open Favourers and Abettors. For otherwiſe, as *John* ſpeaks, we become *Partakers of their evil Doings*. To own them as Fellow-Chriſtians, is to take their Guilt upon our ſelves, or greater. I ſay, *greater*, becauſe

[a] The Objections made to the Method, as *mat prater*, are abundantly anſwered by a very learned Prelate. *Potter* on Church-Government. p. 399, *&c.*

ſuppoſing

ſuppoſing them ſo far innocent as honeſtly to follow their own Judgment, yet while we are of a contrary Judgment, it cannot but be *guilty* Practice and Conduct in us, and very *great* too, to ſmother our Sentiments, or not to bear our Teſtimony in ſuch a way as Chriſt has appointed, againſt all notorious Corruptions either of *Faith*, or *Worſhip*, or *Doctrine*. It appears then ſufficiently both from Scripture directly, and from the very Nature and Reaſon of the Thing, that it is our bounden Duty to refuſe Communion with thoſe that perſiſt in *oppoſing* the *fundamental* Articles of our moſt holy Religion. I am aware that ſeveral Objections have been made, and will be made to what Chriſt has ordered, and the Church has all along practiſed as concerning our Conduct in this Article: For what is there ſo juſt, ſo rational, or ſo commendable, that may not be objected to? However in order to ſatisfy reaſonable Men at leaſt, I deſign a diſtinct Chapter for the further clearing up the Queſtion in Hand.

CHAP. V.

Objections removed, and ſome vulgar Miſtakes rectified.

HAVING laid down our Principles, and the Grounds upon which we go, our next Concern is to remove or obviate whatever threatens to overturn them, or to leſſen their Force, leſt any weak Objections on one

CHAP. V. Side, left unanſwered, may prevail more with ſome Perſons than the ſtrongeſt Arguments on the other. I proceed then to the Buſineſs.

I. It may have been ſometimes invidiouſly ſuggeſted, that the inſiſting ſo ſtrongly upon the *Neceſſity* of believing, or however of not oppoſing this Doctrine, is carrying Matters to an *immoderate* Height, and tends to provoke others to run into a contrary *Extreme* out of a Kind of Indignation, and exceſſive Reſentence. The Plea is ſmooth and ſpecious, and appears to carry a fair Show of *Lenity* and *Moderation* in it, which are Virtues much to be admired, but in Reality it contains little, as here applied, more than artful Abuſe, and ſuch as is frequently played with in other the like Caſes. For the Purpoſe; If any Perſon is diſpoſed to undermine the *Inſpiration* of ſacred Writ, he begins commonly with Complaints of the Stiffneſs and Dogmaticalneſs of common Divines, which prejudice Men of freer Thoughts, as is pretended, againſt Scripture it ſelf, and almoſt force them into another Extreme. So again, if any Man has a Mind to relax the Strictneſs of the Goſpel-Rule, and to bring it down to his Taſte, he falls to declaiming againſt the exceſſive Rigour of Religioniſts, which frighten many ſober Perſons, as is ſaid, from embracing Religion. Complaints of that Kind may ſometimes be juſt, but they are oftner mere Artifice. It will be proper to examine, in the firſt place,

what

what Truth there is in the Suggeſtions brought about our running into *Extremes*. Without all Queſtion, *Extremes* are carefully to be avoided in every thing: *Extreme Cold* may be as bad as *extreme Heat*: And *extreme Lenity* is a Fault, as much as *extreme Severity*: But the thing to be proved is, that the inſiſting upon the Doctrine of the Trinity, as an *eſſential* Article, is an *Extreme*, or that it is not in Reality the true and *golden Mean* between Rigour on one Hand and Lukewarmneſs on the other. It may be true, that the inſiſting upon this Doctrine, may have that *accidental* Effect, to prejudice weak Minds the more againſt it, or againſt Religion it ſelf. In like manner, the inſiſting upon the Doctrine of the *Groſs*, the Duty of *Self-denial*, and the Neceſſity of *univerſal* Righteouſneſs, may have prejudiced many againſt Chriſtianity, and yet daily do ſo. But ſtill if the Doctrine be both *true*, and *important*, it muſt be taught and inculcated: And the Queſtion is not in ſuch Caſes, whether many may not be offended or ſcandalized at any Doctrine, but whether the Doctrine be ſuch as ought to be inſiſted upon. For as a very judicious and learned Prelate [a] has appoſitely obſerved, "St. *Paul* has plainly "taught us, how we ought to conduct our "ſelves in ſuch Caſes. He knew very well, "that *Jew* and *Gentile* took great Offence "at the Doctrine of a *crucified Saviour*, and "he could not but ſee that Chriſtianity would

CHAP. V.

[a] Biſhop of *London*. In his Charge of *May* 28. 1730. p. 28.

"be

CHAP. V. "be more favourably entertained by both, "if that *Offence* were removed, and the "Goſpel reduced to a Scheme of *mere Mo-* "*rality*, ratified by a Perſon ſent from God, "and inforced by ſtronger Aſſurances of Re- "wards and Puniſhments than had ever been "given before. But, notwithſtanding all this, "*we* (ſays he) *preach Chriſt crucified, unto* "*the Jews a ſtumbling Block, and unto the* "*Greeks Fooliſhneſs* [b]. The reaſon is plain: For, the Miniſters of Chriſt are under ſpecial Direction, and muſt not dare to prevaricate in their ſacred Employment. They muſt never preſume to betray the *Truth* of the Goſpel with any view to prevent *Offence*; For, ſuch Offence is *taken*, not *given*, and is therefore of no Moment. They only are to bear the Blame, who are cauſeleſsly *offended* at what they ought to receive with the profoundeſt Reſpect and Veneration.

I may here alſo take notice, that when ſome Perſons of more Warmth than Wiſdom, have gone upon what they call *healing* Meaſures, in order to reconcile many (as they ſuppoſed) to Chriſtianity ſhortened and curtailed in its prime Articles, they have been for the moſt part miſerably diſappointed. Their unwarrantable *Conceſſions*, inſtead of making more *Chriſtians* (*Half-Chriſtians*, I ſhould ſay) have only made more *Infidels*. And it was natural to think, that ſuch would the Reſult be. For when once the Advo-

[b] 1 Cor. i. 23.

cates

cates for Religion begin to recede, beyond what they have Warrant for, they give very great Advantage to the Enemy, who may then modeſtly expect to draw them on farther, upon the ſame Motive, or Principle, which had before carried them too far. For, if they yield to *Importunity*, rather than to *Reaſon*, in one Caſe, why not in another? or if the firſt Step taken out of the way, could appear *rational*, why not a *ſecond*, and a *third*, and ſo on, till there be no End of wandring? It is frequently the Fate of thoſe over-complying Gentlemen, that while they ſtoop too low in hopes to fetch others up, they are themſelves dragged down, and can never recover it. They are inſenſibly carried over to the Party towards which they lean; and inſtead of preſerving a Ballance (which they loſt in the firſt Decline) they are at length found to run in with the other Extreme. The *Epiſcopian* Neutrality ſeldom ſtays long, before it paſſes over into *Arianiſm* or *Socinianiſm*; and theſe again eaſily degenerate into *Deiſm* and *Atheiſm*. It is much to be queſtioned, whether *Myſteries*, after all, are really the Things which are moſt apt to offend the faſhionable World: The *Purity* of the Goſpel Precepts are the hardeſt of Digeſtion; and one *Commandment*, very probably, may make greater Difficulty than many *Creeds*. But the principal Reaſon for ſtriking at *Myſteries* firſt, is becauſe it is more *decent* to begin there; and after a *Breach* once made in

the

CHAP. V. the main Fabrick, it is eaſy to go on to a total Subverſion. The *Deiſts*, in their turn, take up the ſame Topicks of *Moderation* and *Lenity*: "Let not the Men of *Faith* deſpiſe "the Men of *Reaſon*; and again, let not the "Men of *Reaſon* deſpiſe the Men of *Faith*, ſo "long as both agree in the *ſubſtantial* Duties:" This is the Cant. And truly, if *Moderation* is to ſtand for *yielding* and *complying*, be it right or wrong, and if that be all the Rule we have to go by, I do not ſee that the Men argue amiſs. But ſurely we muſt ſtop ſomewhere: And where can we better ſtop, than at *Neceſſaries*, at *Truths* and *important* Truths? For Things of that Value ought never to be ſacrificed to any temporal Conſiderations, or to any Views of a falſe and ſhort-lived Peace.

From hence it may be inferred that it is not owing to any *immoderate* Rigours of the more cautious Divines, if *Infidelity* happens to gain ground, but to the *immoderate* and *extravagant* Conceſſions of thoſe who are not ſo careful as they ſhould be, to keep up the ancient Faith in its firſt Purity and Perfection. Accordingly it may be obſerved, how the *Unbelievers* careſs and compliment thoſe complying Gentlemen who meet them half way, while they are perpetually inveighing againſt the ſtiff Divines, as they call them, whom they can make no Advantage of. They know their Friends from their Foes: And it may be learned from them how the Caſe ſtands; *Fas eſt & ab Hoſte doceri.*

To

To illuſtrate and confirm the general Obſervations, let the Reader reflect a little upon the unhappy conduct of *Socinus*, and the upſhot of it. He had contrived a Syſtem for his Friends to abide by, and he hoped they would reſt there: But many of them, upon the ſame Principles, whereby he had led them ſo far, reſolved to go farther, throwing off the *Worſhip* of *Chriſt*, in Conſequence of their mean Opinion they had entertained of him. *Socinus* reclaimed, remonſtrated, cried out aloud, hoping to ſtop their Progreſs, by his *Earneſtneſs* (for he had yielded too much before to talk of Reaſon now) and to fetch them back; but all to no Purpoſe. He repreſented to them the dreadful Conſequences of diſcarding the *divine Worſhip* of Chriſt: "That it "was rendering the whole Chriſtian Reli- "gion *weak* and *precarious*, was ſapping the "main *Foundation* of their *Faith* and *Hope*, "and grievouſly offending God the *Father*, "and *Chriſt Jeſus* [a]: That he had never yet "met with any Man of true Piety and God- "lineſs who durſt venture upon it, but "that he knew ſeveral of them who had

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[a] Ipſius Chriſti univerſa Religio in *dubium* revocetur, aut ſaltem *Mutationi*, & *Fini* in hoc ipſo Seculo obnoxia redditur; ſummum & præſtantiſſimum noſtræ *Spei* & *Fidei* in Deum *Fundamentum* nobis eripitur; ac denique, ne omnia hinc provenientia mala & incommoda, quæ innumerabilia ſunt, enumerare hic nunc velle videar, in ipſum *Chriſtum* & *Deum Patrem* graviſſimè peccatur.

Socin. ad Radec. Epiſt. iii. p. 387.

thereupon

CHAP. V. "thereupon turned *Epicureans*, or downright *Atheists*[a]. All which was true: But why could not he have ſeen that *Atheiſm* hung at the End of the Chain, till he came to the laſt Link? Never did Man more expoſe himſelf than *Socinus* did in that Inſtance. For indeed the throwing off the *divine Worſhip* of Chriſt was but the natural and inevitable Conſequence of his Scheme, if one would act conſiſtently: And the next Conſequence to that, was *Deiſm*, or *Atheiſm*, by his own Account. So it was plainly telling the World, that he had drawn his Diſciples into a Labyrinth, and knew not how to extricate them. To go back was a mortifying Thought to vain Men; to go forwards, was to plunge into downright Atheiſm. Such generally is the Fate of the Self-opinionated, who will not liſten to ſober Counſels in Time, but precipitately ſtrike off from the right Way to follow they know not what, or to fix they know not where. I might mention thoſe amongſt us who began with *Chriſtianity not myſterious*[b], and in a few Years after ſettled in

[a] Socinus. *Quotquot ego vidi Adorationis Chriſti Oppugnatores, omnes tandem in Atheiſmum ſunt prolapſi; quod & tibi arridet, niſi Sententiam mutaveris.*

Non dixit *Socinus*, omnes quos ipſe vidiſſet Adorationis Chriſti Oppugnatores tandem in *Atheiſmum* fuiſſe prolapſos; ſed neminem ſe ex iſtorum numero adhuc noviſſe, qui Chriſtiana Pietate & Vitæ Sanctimonia eſſet præditus; imò nonnullos ex ipſis ſe videſſe aut ſciviſſe *Epicureos*, & planè *Atheos* factos. Nec mirum eſſe, cum hæc ad *Epicureiſmum & Atheiſmum* Homini Chriſti ſacris initiato Via compendiaria quædam foret. *Diſput. inter F. S. & Chriſtian. Franken.* p. 772, 773.

[b] A Book publiſhed with that Title. A. D. 1696.

Pantheiſm

Pantheiſm[a] little ſhort of the broadeſt *Atheiſm*: And others might be named, who from finding fault with the Council of *Nice*, for *corrupting* Chriſtianity[b] (as they fondly ſuppoſed) have gradually, and in a Courſe of Years, come to reject Chriſtianity it ſelf, as *needleſs* and *uſeleſs*, and all revealed Religion as mere *Rubbiſh*[c]. When once Men break off from the *Reverence* due to ſacred Writ, and to the eminent Lights of the beſt and pureſt Ages, they roll downwards apace, and very rarely recover it. For if they were not ſtrong enough to ſtand at firſt upon *plain* and *firm* Ground, how ſhall they keep ſteady afterwards upon *Declivity*? I ſay then, that the Blame lies not upon thoſe who abide unmoveable in the old and well-tried Doctrine of the Trinity, but upon thoſe that are ſoon ſhaken in Mind, and depart from it. To adhere firmly to it, is not Rigour, but Conſtancy: And to forſake it, or to grow *indifferent* towards it, is not Prudence or Moderation, but unmanly Levity, and Wantonneſs, or ſomething worſe. CHAP. V.

II. It is ſometimes pleaded, that *a wicked Life is the worſt Hereſy*, intimating as if Breaches made in our moſt holy *Faith* were of ſlight Conſideration, ſo long as a Man lives a good *moral* Life, in other Reſpects. I readily allow that a *wicked Life* is the *worſt* Thing imaginable: But I conceive fur-

[a] The *Pantheiſticon*, publiſhed A. D. 1720.
[b] Rights of the Chriſtian Church. p. 196. &c. pub. 1706.
[c] Chriſtianity as old as the Creation. p. 421. publiſhed 1730.

ther,

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ther, that the Spreading and Propagating of corrupt Doctrines, is leading a *wicked Life*, in the ſtricteſt Senſe. I ſpeak not of mere Miſtakes in Judgment, but of *eſpouſing* and *propagating* them; corrupting the Faith in important Articles, and diffuſing ſuch Corruptions. A Life ſo ſpent, is a *wicked Life*, if oppoſing divine Truths, undermining the Goſpel, and ſubverting Souls, be *wicked* Attempts, as they undoubtedly are. It muſt be owned, that a *good Life* is every Thing to a Chriſtian: But what does a *good Life* conſiſt of? Univerſal Righteouſneſs in *Faith*, and *Manners*. Therefore to talk of a Man's leading a *good Life* while he is corrupting the Faith and diſſeminating pernicious Doctrines, is talking Contradictions. As to the *Sincerity*, or *good Meaning* of the Men who do it, that ſhall be conſidered under another Article: I ſpeak now of the *Nature* and *Quality* of the Thing, abſtracted from the Circumſtances of the Perſon: And I ſay, it is *Wickedneſs* and a perfect Contradiction to a *good Life*. It is *Evil in it ſelf*, and the *Iniquity* of it is fixed in the Nature and Reaſon of Things.

Some have ſeemed to wonder* why com-

* The Author of the *Defence of Scripture as the only Standard of Faith* is one of thoſe Wonderers. (p. 40.) But he intirely miſtakes the Caſe, oppoſing *Imperfection in Knowledge* which is his ſoft Name for Hereſy, to *Imperfection in Practice*: Whereas Hereſy is not barely Imperfection in Knowledge, but it is *evil Practice*; for ſpreading pernicious Doctrines is a Fault in the *Conduct of Life*. Therefore the Oppoſition lies between *one evil Practice*, and *another*, and the Queſtion is, which is worſt.

monly

monly a warmer Zeal ſhould be ſhewn againſt *Hereſies*, than againſt ordinary *Immoralities*: The Wonder will preſently ceaſe, if the Caſe be but rightly ſtated. Ask, whether one that commits *Fornication*, or one that *teaches* and inculcates it, as lawful Practice, is the *wickeder* Man? Here the Caſe is plain, that the *Heretick* who takes pains to ſpread ſuch diſſolute Doctrine, and to debauch the Principles of the Age, is incomparably a viler Man, than he that barely perpetrates the Sin. So then it muſt be allowed, that an *Heretick* in *Morality*, is infinitely a greater Sinner, than one who thro' his Luſts and Paſſions, merely leads an *immoral* Life. CHAP. V.

So as to *Faith*, aſk, whether a Man that perverts any material Article, either careleſly, or through ſome Prejudice, but lets it go no farther, or one that does the ſame Thing, and then takes upon him to *teach* and *inculcate* the erroneous Doctrine to others; I ſay, aſk which of the two is the *wickeder* Man? The latter, undoubtedly. He is the *Heretick* in teaching and patroniſing a Corruption of Faith, while the other who corrupts it only for himſelf, is no formal *Heretick*, as I conceive, in ſtrict Propriety of Speech[a], tho' not a good Man. Thus,

[a] Qui Sententiam ſuam, quamvis falſam atque perverſam, nulla pertinaci animoſitate defendunt, præſertim quam non audacia præſumptionis ſuæ pepererunt, ſed a ſeductis atque in errorem lapſis Parentibus acceperunt; quærunt autem cauta Solicitudine Veritatem, corrigi parati cum invenerint, nequaquam ſunt inter *Hæreticos* deputandi. *Auguſtin. Epiſt.* xliii. p. 88. Ed. Benedict.

Chap. V. while we compare an *Heretick* in *Morality* with a Man merely immoral; or an *Heretick* in *Faith* with a Man that is merely a *Misbeliever*; it is obvious to perceive, that there is much greater Malignity in thoſe that *teach* or *eſpouſe* what they ought not, than in thoſe that merely believe wrong, or do wrong: Becauſe the Leaders and Abettors of any ill Thing, diffuſe the Miſchief all around; the other let it die with them. Thus far, I preſume, is plain and clear.

After thus comparing Kind with Kind, let us next take them as it were acroſs, and compare the *Heretick* in *Faith* with an *immoral* Man, in the common Senſe of the Word. We will allow, that an *Heretick* in matters of mere *Revelation*, is not ſo bad a Man, generally ſpeaking, as an *Heretick* in *Morality*; but ſtill he may be a much worſe Man, or to ſpeak plainer, may do a great deal more *Miſchief* by his *Doctrine*, than the immoral Man may do by his *Example*. For beſides his propagating *dangerous* Errors, ſubverting Souls, it is farther to be conſidered, that he ſets himſelf up as a *rival* Teacher, in Oppoſition to the *faithful* Miniſters of Chriſt: He weakens their Hands, fruſtrates their pious Labours, perverts their Flocks, leſſens their Eſteem in the Eyes of their People, gives the common Enemy a Handle to inſult and blaſpheme, raiſes a kind of Flame and War in the Church, and remotely adminiſters to all Immorality and Diſſoluteneſs of Manners, by taking off the Influence of the beſt

Inſtructions

Inſtructions of their more knowing and more edifying Guides. Theſe are no ſlight Miſchiefs, but great, and wide, and often of long Continuance, and in ſeveral Reſpects, irreparable[a]. Therefore let it not be thought ſtrange, if the moſt holy and excellent Men have ever expreſſed the greateſt Deteſtation of all Attempts of that kind. Scarcely is a Man excuſable for advancing even a *Truth*, to the Detriment of publick *Peace*, if it be of a ſlight Nature, not worth the contending for, or ſuch as might innocently be dropped: But to advance *Falſehoods*, (and in Points very *material*) tending to create infinite Diſturbances here, as well as to betray many to Perdition hereafter; theſe are Crimes *unpardonable* if the Authors ſee what they do; and if they do not, yet their Guilt remains if they *might ſee*, and will not. However, the Nature and Quality of the Thing is not altered by their ſeeing or not ſeeing: For *Hereſy* is ſtill *Hereſy*, CHAP. V.

[a] Mr. *Bayle* deſcribes it thus: "I do not know where we "can find out Crimes, which are not of a leſs heinous Nature "than That of rending the myſtical Body of *Jeſus Chriſt*, "That Spouſe which he has redeemed with his Blood, That "Mother which begets us to God, which nouriſhes us with "the Milk of that Wiſdom which is without Guile, which "leads us to everlaſting Bliſs. What fouler Crime can we "think of, than rebelling againſt ſuch a Mother, than defaming "her all the World over, endeavouring to ſtir up her Children againſt her, tearing them from her Boſom by Millions, "to drag them, as much as in us lies, into everlaſting Flames, "them and their Poſterity from Generation to Generation? "Where can we find the firſt-rate High Treaſon againſt the "divine Majeſty, unleſs in Inſtances of this kind? *Supplem.* to *Philoſoph. Commentary.* pref. p. 517.

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tho' a Man intends well, as much as *Perſecution* is ſtill *Perſecution*, tho' a Perſon thinks and believes, that he *does God Service* in it. Let it not therefore be imagined, that *falſe-Teachers* are to be numbered among the *ſmaller* Offenders, or that they are not, generally ſpeaking, the greateſt of Sinners. Accordingly, we find, our Bleſſed Lord never ſhewed a keener Reſentment againſt any Men whatever, than againſt *falſe Prophets*[a], or thoſe who taught *falſe Doctrines*[b] in oppoſition to *divine* Truths. I interpret *falſe Prophets* ſo as to include *falſe Teachers*, ſuch at leaſt as corrupt *ſound* Doctrine in any *fundamental* Article: And ſo *Grotius* and *Hammond* interpret, like judicious and knowing Men. But Dr. *Whitby*, diſliking that Conſtruction, advances ſome odd Speculations of his own, to pervert the true Meaning of the Texts. He pleads that *all falſe Teachers*[c], all that aſſert any Thing wrong, are not included. Perhaps not: But yet *all* that manifeſtly pervert the *Faith*, in any great Degree, may be included notwithſtanding; yea and muſt be, by parity of Reaſon. He pretends it to be *ridiculous*, to judge of *falſe* Teachers, by *falſe* Doctrines. But how can we judge better of a *falſe* Teacher, than by the *Falſehood* of what he teaches? It is the very Rule

[a] Matt. viii. 15. xxiv. 24. Mark xiii. 22. Compare Acts xx. 29, 30. See *Grotius* and *Hammond* on *Matt.* vii. 15.

[b] Matt. xv. 4—9.

[c] Whitby. on Matt. vii. 15.

which

which St. *John* lays down [d], and ſo does St. *Paul* [e]; which might have deterred any conſidering Man from calling it *ridiculous*. Beſides, in the very Reaſon of the Thing, what Rule could be pitched upon either *ſurer* or *wiſer*? Falſe Teachers would pretend extraordinary Endowments of *Learning* perhaps, or *Sanctity*, or *Piety*, and an affectionate Concern for the Happineſs of thoſe whom they ſhould addreſs themſelves to: But they might be detected by *their Fruits* [f]. For if their *Doctrine* ſhould be found *contrary* to the Doctrine of Chriſt, that is *Conviction* at once, and all their glozing Pretences are worth nothing. They are *falſe* Prophets, becauſe their Doctrines are *falſe*: What can be a plainer Proof of it? neither is it any Objection to this, that our Lord afterwards ſpeaks of *doing the Will of his Father*, and of *working Iniquity*: For maintaining the *Truth*, is *doing* God's *Will*; and corrupting or reſiſting it, is *working Iniquity*. Therefore let CHAP. V.

[d] 1 John iv. 2, 3. 2 John 9, 10, 11.

[e] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

[f] Ἆρα γε ἐκ τῶν καρπῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγνώσεσθε αὐτούς. ἐκεινα μὲν ἦν καὶ αὐτὰ καθ' ἑαυτὰ τὰ δυσαγῆ καὶ παμμίαρα δόγματα τὸν αἰτίων ἐπιδεῖξαι πάλιμα· ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ καρποῦ, φησὶ, τὸ δένδρον γινώσκεται. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. iii. p. 226.

Sed quid ait Salvator? *ex Fructibus eorum cognoſcetis eos*, id eſt, cum cœperint divinas illas voces non jam proferre tantum, ſed etiam exponere, nec adhuc jactare ſolùm, ſed etiam interpretari; tunc amaritudo illa tunc acerbitas, tunc rabies intelligetur, tunc novitium virus exhalabitur, tunc prophanæ novitates aperientur; tunc primùm ſcindi ſepem videas, tunc transferri patrum terminos, tunc catholicam fidem cœdi, tunc eccleſiaſticum dogma lacerari. Vincent. Lirinenſ. Commonit. cap. xxxvi.

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this be *included* at leaſt among other *bad Fruits*, other Works of Iniquity; for it is properly ſuch. Dr. *Whitby* pretends further, that *falſe Prophets* is not a Name for *falſe Teachers* at large, or for *Hereticks*: That appears to be his Meaning. But yet certain it is from the new Teſtament, and from ſome of the Texts which he himſelf produces, that it is. St. *Peter* makes the Name of *falſe Prophets* equivalent to that of *falſe Teachers*, who ſhould *bring in damnable Hereſies* [a]. And St. *John* gives the Name of *falſe Prophets* [b] to the *Hereticks* of his Time; namely, to the *Docetæ*, and *Cerinthians*, and others of like Stamp, as I have partly obſerved already, and ſhall more fully ſhew in a ſucceeding Chapter. Therefore it is right to interpret the *falſe Prophets* which our Lord ſpeaks of, in ſuch a Senſe as to include all *Hereticks*, all *falſe Teachers*, who in any grievous Manner, or Degree, ſhould pervert the Goſpel of Chriſt. And ſo the primitive Fathers interpret our Lord's Words *

As our Lord himſelf made uſe of a particular ſharpneſs of Expreſſion againſt *falſe* Teachers, or *Hereticks*, ſo alſo did his *Apoſtles* after him. St. *Paul* has done it very often, againſt

[a] 2 Pet. ii. 1. [b] 1 John iv. 1.

* *Juſtin. Martyr.* dialog. p. 100. 101. 249. Edit. Jebb. Alias 208. 316. Thirlby.
Tertullian. Præſcript. c. iv. xliv.
Cyrill. Hieroſol. Catech. iv. 1.
Hieronym. in Matt. vii. 15. xxiv. 24.
Athanaſ. ad Epiſc. Ægypti et Lib. p. 270, 272.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. iii. Præf. p. 225.

thoſe

thoſe *grievous Wolves*, (as he calls them) which may appear in ſome meaſure from what has been cited above: I ſhall only refer to ſome noted Texts [a], to avoid prolixity; but obſerving alſo in paſſing, that tho' St. *Paul* delivered an *immoral* Man over to *Satan* [b] for his Incontinence, yet he did not uſe ſo ſtrong an Expreſſion as *Anathema*, or *accurſed*, which he pronounced upon Hereticks [c]. St. *Peter* is exceeding tart againſt ſome *falſe Teachers* of his Days [d], who *privily brought in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them.* They alſo taught Men to ſit looſe from all decent Rule and Order, and under Pretence of *Chriſtian Liberty*, to run riot in Luxury and diſſolute Behaviour. They were *Hereticks* in *Morality*, as well as in *Faith*, and of the worſt kind: And therefore what is ſaid of them, is not applicable to other *falſe Teachers* in the ſame *Degree*, but in *Proportion* to the Malignity of their reſpective *Hereſy*. The *Nicolaitans*, I ſuppoſe, were the Men whom St. *Peter* pointed to [e]. I hinted that they were Hereticks in *Faith*, becauſe their Doctrine, relating to God and *Chriſt*, was much the ſame with that of *Cerinthus*, as *Irenæus* teſtifies of them [f]: And thus we may eaſily underſtand why St. *Peter* ſays of them,

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[a] Acts xx. 29, 30. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Gal. i. 8, 9. —— v. 10, 12. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. —— iv. 1, 2, 3, —— vi. 3, 4, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 18. 2 Tim. iii. 1 —— 9. Tit. i. 10 —— 16. iii. 10, 11.

[b] 1 Cor. v. 5. [c] Gal. i. 8, 9.

[d] 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3.

[e] Vid. *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 600.

[f] Iren. l. iii. c. xi. Conf. *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 367, 383, 406.

CHAP. V. that they *denied the Lord that bought them.* St. *Jude* expreſſes himſelf with uncommon Warmth againſt the ſame *falſe Teachers*, whom St. *Peter* had before cenſured. St. *John*, who was all Love, and Meekneſs, and Charity, yet ſeverely laſhes the *Hereticks* of his Times, either ſuch as denied Chriſt's *Humanity*, or ſuch as impugned his *Divinity*; which I ſhall ſhew in due Time and Place. The Names which he beſtows upon them are as follows, *Antichriſts*[b], *Liars*[c], *Seducers*[d], *Falſe Prophets*[e], *Deceivers*[f]. He ſcrupled not to go wandring upon the Mountains, in queſt of a wicked Robber, a Captain of a Gang, in order to recover him to Chriſt, and he did recover him[g]: But with the Heretick *Cerinthus*, a Corrupter of the *Truth*, he would not ſtay under the ſame Roof[h]: By which it may appear, how much he deteſted *Hereſies* above common *Immoralities*. His Diſciple *Ignatius*, an Apoſtolical Man, was exactly of the ſame Sentiments. For, ſays he, (ſpeaking of them that commit Adultery, and the like) "They that *corrupt* (debauch) Fa-
"milies, *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*:
"Therefore, if they who do ſuch things ac-
"cording to the Fleſh, periſh; how much
"more he, who by his pernicious Doctrine
"corrupts that divine *Faith*, for the which
"*Jeſus Chriſt* was crucified? Such a Man ſo
"*defiled* ſhall go into Fire unquenchable;

[a] Vid. *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 594.
[b] 1 John ii. 18, 22——iv. 3. 2 John 7. [c] 1 John ii. 22.
[d] 1 John ii. 26. [e] 1 John iv. 1. [f] 2 John 7. [g] Euſeb. E.H. l.iii.c.23. Clem. Alex. p.959. Ed. Ox. [h] See above.p. 127.

"and

" and ſo alſo ſhall he that hearkens unto him[a]. CHAP. V.
See from hence how this holy Biſhop, ſoon after a *Martyr*, abominated *Hereſies* beyond even great *Immoralities*, as being of more diffuſive and more laſting Malignity, and not deſtroying Men's Bodies, but ſubverting their Souls. His Scholar *Polycarp*, another eminent Biſhop of thoſe Times, was a Man of exemplary Severity againſt all kinds of *Sinners*, but againſt none ſo much as againſt *Marcion*, a noted Heretick, whom he calls the *firſt born of Satan*[b]. I ſhall mention but one Authority more, the very pious and holy St. *Cyprian*, of the third Century. He argues the Point at length, that a *Heretick* is a much wickeder Man, than one that lapſed into *Idolatry* under Perſecution. He ſtates the Compariſon to this Effect. " This " is a worſe Crime than that which the Lapſers " may ſeem to have committed, who yet do " a ſevere Penance for their Crime, and im- " plore the Mercy of God by a long and ple- " nary Satisfaction. The one ſeeks to the " Church, and humbly intreats her Favour, the " other reſiſts the Church, and proclaims open

[a] οἱ οἰκοφθόροι βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν· εἰ οὖν οἱ κατὰ σάρκα ταῦτα πράσσοντες ἀπέθανον, πόσῳ μᾶλλον εἰ μὴ πίστει θεοῦ ἡ καινὴ διδασκαλία φθείρῃ, ὑπὲρ ἧς Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς ἐσταυρώθη; ὁ τοιοῦτος ῥυπαρὸς γενόμενος, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον χωρήσει, ὁμοίως καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ.

Ignat. ad Epheſ. c. xvi.

[b] Polycarpus Marcioni aliquando occurenti ſibi & dicenti, cognoſcis nos? Reſpondit, cognoſco te *Primogenitum Satanæ*. Tantum Apoſtoli & horum diſcipuli habuerunt timorem, ut nec verbo communicarent alicui eorum qui adulteraverant veritatem, Iren. l. iii. c. 3. Conf. Euſeb. E. H. l. iv. c. 14. The like is obſerved of *Juſtin*, and *Irenæus*, by *Ittigius* Hiſtor. Eccleſ. Sæc. 2. p. 91.

" War

CHAP. V. "War againſt her. The one has the Excuſe of "*Neceſſity*, the other is retained by his own "Wilfulneſs only. He that lapſes only hurts "*himſelf*; but he that endeavours to make a "Hereſy or Schiſm, draws *many* after him. Here "is only the loſs of *one Soul*; but there a multi- "tude are endangered. The Lapſer is ſen- "ſible that he has done amiſs, and therefore "mourns and laments for it: But the other "proudly ſwells in his Crime, pleaſes himſelf "in his Miſ-conduct, divides the Children "from their Mother, draws away the Sheep "from the Paſtor, and diſturbs the Sacraments "of God: And whereas a *Lapſer* ſins but "once, the other ſins daily [a].

From the Authorities I have given, it may abundantly appear that *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and their Followers, have, in a very diſtinguiſhing manner, expreſſed their Abhorrence of *falſe Prophets*, *falſe Apoſtles*, *falſe Teachers*; that is to ſay, of *Hereticks*, and their open Favourers or Abettors. It is true, there may be great difference between *Hereſy* and *Hereſy*; and what is ſaid of Hereſies in general, is not applicable in the ſame Meaſure or Degree to every Hereſy in particular, but in *Proportion* only: In the mean while however, it is evident, that *Hereſy* is not a thing of ſlight Moment, but a Crime of the firſt Magnitude, if underſtood to mean the *eſpouſing* of *falſe* Doctrines, tending to corrupt either *Faith* or *Morals* in any conſiderable Inſtances. But I ſup-

[a] Cyprian. de Unitat. Eccl. p. 117.

poſe,

poſe, they who think lightly of it, mean only ſome ignorant or careleſs *Miſtake in Judgment*, which a Man keeps to himſelf, and diſturbs not the World with: Which indeed does not amount to *Hereſy* (as I have more than once ſaid) does not make a *Heretick*. Hereſy lies not merely in the inward Thought, but in the Overt-acts, either *teaching* pernicious Doctrines, or ſupporting and encouraging them that do. Hereſy ſo conſidered is *Evil-doing* [a], and is condemned among the *Works* of the *Fleſh* [b]. So then, inſtead of ſaying, that *a wicked Life is the worſt Hereſy*, which is ſcarce *Senſe*, I ſhould chooſe rather to ſay, what is both *Senſe* and *Truth*, (generally ſpeaking) that *a Life of Hereſy is a moſt wicked Life*: It is joining with *Satan* and his Emiſſaries, in a formed Oppoſition to God and his Church, is complicated *Impiety* and *Immorality*.

III. But it will be pleaded further, that ſuch as teach *falſe* Doctrines, may be very *ſincere*; and their *Sincerity* will be their Protection before the awful Tribunal, or however ought to ſcreen them from Cenſure here. But it behoves us to conſider well of this ſo ſovereign a Preſervative, that we may not truſt too far to it; becauſe if it ſhould fail at laſt, there is nothing then left to depend on. *Sincerity*, I obſerve, is a very equivocal ambiguous Term, uſed in more Senſes than one: And therefore, before I enter deeper into the Subject, I would diſtinguiſh it into two kinds. 1. *Sincerity* as

[a] 2 John 11. [b] Gal. v. 20.

oppoſed

Chap. V. oppoſed to *Hypocriſy* and *Pretence*. 2. Sincerity, as oppoſed to *Prejudice* and *Partiality*. There is no diſcourſing clearly upon the Point, without attending carefully to this Diſtinction. Next then let us examine how the preſent Queſtion about the *Iniquity* of teaching falſe Doctrine, or the *Juſtice* of *cenſuring* them, is at all affected by what is pleaded of the *Sincerity* of the Teachers, taking Sincerity either in this, or in that Senſe.

1. Conſider we, firſt, *Sincerity* as oppoſed to *Hypocriſy* and *Pretence*. Suppoſe the Teachers of falſe Doctrine to be *verily perſuaded* in their Minds and Conſciences, that ſuch their Doctrine is *true*, and their Conduct *right*, and that they *ought* to teach it: This is bringing the Matter to the Caſe of an *erroneous* Conſcience, upon our preſent Suppoſition, that their Doctrine is *falſe*, and ours *true*. Well then, what does an *erroneous* Conſcience amount to? Will it juſtify Men in *evil* Practices? Or is it ſufficient to bear them out againſt Cenſure from others? No by no means. Time was when many thought it their Duty to *kill* Chriſt's Diſciples; they believed it to be *doing God Service* [a]: And yet no body can doubt but thoſe *ſincere* Men ſo far, were guilty of *Murder*, and no one can think it an hard Cenſure upon them, to declare ſo. St. *Paul* in particular, before his Converſion, *verily thought with himſelf, that* he *ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jeſus* [b]. And yet how

[a] John xvi. 2. [b] Acts xxvi. 9.

often did he afterwards condemn himſelf as a *Sinner*, for doing thoſe very Things; becauſe indeed he had done wickedly, in perſecuting the *Truth*, in perſecuting the *Church* of *God*, when he might have been better informed. The like may be ſaid, when Men *ſincerely* deny and oppoſe the important Truths of the Goſpel, and by their Hereſies give great Diſturbance, and do infinite Miſchief to God's Church. Their being verily *perſuaded* that *Truth* is on their Side, or that they are doing *right*, if it may be ſomewhat of Excuſe as a mitigating Circumſtance, yet is no Juſtification of their Conduct, before God, or Man. They are Impugners of divine Truths, notwithſtanding, and Subverters of Souls; and therefore condemned by God, and liable to all ſuch *Cenſures* from Man, as Scripture ordains in Caſe of *Hereſy*. So then, *Sincerity*, in the firſt Senſe of the Word, as oppoſed to *Guile*, or *Hypocriſy*, is of no avail in this Matter. It changes not the Nature of Things, nor the Rules of Conduct: we are as much obliged to *admoniſh*, to *avoid*, to *reject* a Man that thus *ſincerely* corrupts the Faith, and ſeduces common Chriſtians, as the Man that does it in *Guile*, and againſt his own Conſcience: Becauſe indeed, tho' the *Iniquity* may not be altogether ſo great, yet *Iniquity* it is; and becauſe the *Miſchief*, either way, is the ſame, and it is our bounden Duty to guard againſt it. I muſt further add, that Scripture mentions a Caſe of *God*'s ſending upon Men *ſtrong Deluſion*, in the

CHAP. V. the way of judicial Infatuation, *that they ſhould believe a Lie*[a], and *that they all might be damned who believe not the Truth, but have Pleaſure in Unrighteouſneſs.* Now, by the Rule of *Sincerity* (in this firſt Senſe) even ſuch abandon'd Creatures as the Apoſtle there ſpeaks of, might plead *not guilty*, as teaching nothing but what they *really* believe, nothing which they *condemn themſelves* for, or conceive to be *falſe*. They teach and propagate *Lies*, but they *believe* them to be *true* all the while. There is no Uncharitableneſs in judging[b], that all who propagate *Deiſm* and *Infidelity* in a Chriſtian Country, (renouncing their *Baptiſm*) are under ſuch *judicial* Blindneſs, if they *really* believe the *Lies* which they are ſo induſtrious to ſpread: And their pretended *Sincerity*, in that Caſe, is no alleviation of their Crime, but the worſt Symptom of it. Therefore *Sincerity* in this Senſe, as ſignifying only, *believing* what one *teaches*, can ſcarce amount to a tolerable Plea, by it ſelf, ſince it is what may be found in Men of a ſear'd Conſcience, and a reprobate Mind.

2. Let us next conſider the ſecond Senſe of *Sincerity*, as oppoſed to *Prejudice* and *Partiality*, and ſee whether, or how far that alters the Caſe, more than the other. But here a Difficulty occurs at the firſt mention of it; How will it be *proved?* I do not ſay merely to other Men, but how will it be proved to a

[a] 2 Theſſ. ii. 11, 12.
[b] John iii. 19. 2. Cor. iv. 3, 4. Hebr. x. 26 —— 31. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21, 22.

Man's ſelf? If a Man pleads his *Sincerity* in this Caſe, he ought to *know* that he has it, or he does but trifle with himſelf and others. He is to prove that he has no *Prepoſſeſſion*, no *Byaſs*, no *leaning* to a Side: He is to prove that he has uſed all due *Diligence* in looking out for Evidence; that neither *Haſte*, nor *Sloth*, nor *Impatience* has hinder'd: He is to prove, that he has uſed all proper *Care* and *Exactneſs* in *comparing* and *ballancing* the Reaſons and Arguments on both Sides: In ſhort, he is to prove, that he has neither *deſignedly*, nor *careleſsly* left out any Thing in the Account, nor at length made a Concluſion upon any other View, or Motive, but that *Reaſon* and *Truth* ſo required: For ſubmitting to *Reaſon*, without any Byaſs, That is *Sincerity*. When he has proved this, he has proved himſelf *ſincere*, and then he is juſtified. But I humbly conceive, that the ſhorter and plainer way would be, to ſay, that he has examined the Queſtion, weigh'd the Reaſons, and thereupon finds, that his Judgment is *right* and *well grounded*, and therefore he abides by it: For that is what the whole comes to; and ſo the Proof of our *Sincerity*, in this ſecond Senſe of the Word, reſolves at length into the Merits of the main Cauſe. He that has *Reaſon* on his Side, (I except the caſe of unavoidable Incapacity) he is the *ſincere* Man: For if any Perſon jumps to a Concluſion without Premiſes, or lays more weight upon it than his *Reaſons* will ſupport; it is plain that there is ſomething beſides *Reaſon*, which

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which ſways him, and which determines him. Be it Warmth of Temper, be it Wearineſs and Impatience, be it partial Fondneſs for Novelty, be it what it will; if it is not *Reaſon*, it is *Prejudice* and *Partiality*, (I except againſt unavoidable Incapacity) and the Man is not *ſincere* in the ſtrict Senſe; which yet is the only Senſe that can be at all to the Purpoſe. One might ſay then to ſuch a Perſon who pleads his *Sincerity*, prove it, and we admit of it: *Sincerity* without *Reaſons* to prove it, is a *dead* Sincerity. And we may here apply what St. *James* ſays in another Caſe, with a very little change: *Shew me thy* Sincerity *without* thy Reaſons, *and I will ſhew thee my* Sincerity *by my* Reaſons. He that *proves* his Point, beſt proves his *Sincerity*. There is no other Way for it, unleſs a Man will plead *Ignorance*, or *Incapacity*; And then why is he confident? The Sum therefore of all is, that the Queſtion about *Sincerity* reſolves at length into the main Queſtion in Debate, and is to be decided by it. There might ſeem at firſt hearing, to be ſomething in the Plea of *Sincerity*; and indeed, taking it in the firſt Senſe, it might be certainly *known*, to a Man's ſelf, if it could be of any Service to him in the Cauſe: But it is a Point acknowledged on all Hands, that a Man's being thus *ſincerely* a *Sinner*, does not make him a *Saint*. As to *Sincerity* in the latter Senſe, That would be of Service to us, if it could be proved[a];

[a] See *Rogers*'s diſcourſe of the inviſible Church. p. 22, 23, Edit. 3d. *Rogers*. Review. p. 109.

But

But to *prove* it, is the ſame as to prove that *Truth* and *Reaſon* are on our Side; that we are *clear* in the Matter, and go upon *ſure* Grounds. So then, the pleading *Sincerity*, in the preſent Caſe, is only fetching a Compaſs, to come round about again to the place where we ſet out. For all turns at laſt upon this; who has the *beſt Reaſons* to ſupport his Perſuaſion? If they who oppoſe the Doctrine of the Trinity, teach *falſe* and *pernicious* Doctrine, and it can be *proved* upon them, we are right in condemning them, and in refuſing Communion with them. We have no Occaſion to enquire into their *Sincerity*; which, in whatever Senſe we take it, is an inſignificant Plea, and ſuch as ought to be thrown out on both Sides, ſerving only for Amuſement, diverting them from the Buſineſs in Hand. CHAP. V.

It was upon theſe or the like Conſiderations that I took Occaſion to ſay formerly: "We "have nothing to do to inquire after your "*Sincerity*, of which God is Judge: Neither "*civil* Judicatures, nor *eccleſiaſtical* Courts, "ever proceed upon that Bottom. Our Buſineſs is, not to conſider the *Sincerity* of "the Men, but the *Nature*, *Quality*, and "*Tendency* of the Doctrine. There have "been ſincere *Photinians*, ſincere *Samoſatenians*, ſincere *Sabellians*, ſincere *Papiſts*, ſincere *Jews* and *Mahometans*. And indeed, "what Sects are there that have not *ſincere* "Men amongſt them?" To which I may

[a] Second Defence, p. 7.

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now briefly add, that all Sects have *many* who are *ſincere* in the *firſt* Senſe of the Word, and have *ſome*, probably, in the *ſecond* Senſe alſo, but known to God only, who alone can judge how far their Prejudices are *inſuperable*, or their Ignorance *unavoidable*. I was willing to repeat here what I had aſſerted in another Place, becauſe there is a Gentleman to whom this plain Doctrine has appeared *not a little ſurprizing* [a]. And thereupon he has been pleaſed to ask, *Is the Doctor willing to be reſponſible, at laſt, for the Nature, Quality, and Tendency of all his Notions?* To which I anſwer, willing or not willing, every Man is *reſponſible*, at laſt, for the Doctrines he teaches. And if they are *falſe* and *pernicious* (unleſs the Error were unavoidable) they fall under the ſame Condemnation with thoſe *idle Words*, of which *Account* muſt be *given* at the *Day of Judgment* [b]. But, that I alſo may ask a Queſtion in my Turn, is that Gentleman willing to be *reſponſible* for his *Sincerity*, that is to ſay, for his *Impartiality* in every View, free from all *Byaſſes* or *Prejudices?* Or is he *ſure* that he has no *culpable* Neglects, no *Precipitation* of Judgment to charge himſelf with? When he can be able to ſay, he *knows* he has not, I preſume I may as reaſonably ſay, I *know* what the Nature, Quality, and Tendency of a Doctrine is: And I conceive, this

[a] Reply to Mr. *P. C*'s. Letter, p. 52.
[b] Matt. xii. 36.

is

is a much *ſurer* and *ſafer* Rule to judge by, than what he propoſes. A *well-grounded* Aſſurance muſt be had, either of our own ſtrict *Sincerity* and *unprejudiced* Reaſon, or elſe of the *Truth* and *Juſtice* of what we eſpouſe. Now, I conceive, in the general, it is much eaſier to come at the *latter*, than at the *former*, nay and that the natural and regular Proceſs is, to *prove* the *former* by the *latter*. The Gentleman asks farther, *is it impoſſible for him to be miſtaken in any of his Inquiries into Truth?* I know, it is very poſſible for frail and fallible Men to be miſtaken in what they *ſay*, tho' not in what they *prove*: And therefore one would take care to advance nothing as of Moment to be believed, but upon *clear* and *ſure* Grounds, ſuch as the Reaſon of Mankind ought to ſubmit to. But this I ſhall ſay more to, under another Head. However, to return him a Queſtion, as before: *Is it impoſſible for him to be miſtaken* (or rather, is it not very natural and eaſy for him to miſtake) in judging of his *Sincerity?* I underſtand it in the Senſe of *Impartiality*, the only Senſe pertinent to the Cauſe in Hand. It is further asked; *May not ſome Things which he has, or however ſhall hereafter advance, differ*, in ſome ſort, *from the Ideas in the Divine Mind?* Here the Terms, *ſome Things*, *ſhall hereafter*, and *in ſome ſort*, are ſo obſcure and indefinite, that there is no returning a definitive Anſwer, more than this; that what God has *revealed* concerning the *Trinity*, is, no Doubt, agreeable

CHAP. V. agreeable to the *Divine Mind*: And that is all that we contend for, appealing to *Scripture* for it. However, here again, I presume, we can be at least as *sure* that our Doctrine answers the *Ideas* of the *Divine Mind*, as we can be that our *Sincerity* is such as God sees no Flaws in. So the Question returns; which Method may we best trust to? which is the surest and safest Rule to judge by? By a Man's knowing *himself* perfectly, or by his knowing the Truth of Things?

The Author proceeds to tell us, that *Sincerity* is a proper thing to be inqui'r'd after in such cases, and that *civil Judicatures* at least do it, when any Person is arraign'd. But do they ever inquire whether the Person arraign'd might believe it *lawful* to *steal* in Case of Necessity, or might judge it his *Duty* to affront the Government, or to talk Treason against the Crown? If the Plea of *Sincerity* were to be admitted in such Cases, it would never fail to be pleaded: We should then have new Employment for Juries, to sit upon Men's Hearts; and the *Verdict*, of Course, would be brought in for the *Criminal*, unless he were weak enough to confess Malice prepense, and that he acted against *Conscience*. The Law of the Land, and the Law of common Sense too, has taken a shorter, wiser Way, which is to presume that when a Man has done an ill Thing, he either *knew* that it was *Evil*, or else *ought* to have known it. *Ignorantia Juris non excusat Delictum*, is, I think, the fundamental Maxim they go upon. Every Man

Man is obliged to know his Duty; and it is at his own Peril, if he miſtakes the *Law* he is to be judged by[a]. What Room then is there for the Plea of *Sincerity?* But the Gentleman obſerves that the *Characters of ſuch as are impeached* are of ten *inquired into*, and have *great Weight.* Yes, in order to judge whether they are guilty of the *Fact*, and how far it was deſigned and willful. But, I believe, if it ſhould appear that the *Offender* tranſgreſſed upon *Principle*, and perſiſted in it, not ſenſible of any Fault, but taking upon him to be *wiſer* than the *Laws*, or the *Court*, and to correct his *Judges*, ſuch *Sincerity* ſo pleaded, would be ſo far from alleviating the Crime, or mitigating the Sentence, that it would do juſt the reverſe: And the Court

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[a] Mr. *Bayle*, in few Words, well illuſtrates this Article. "There is good Reaſon for not excuſing an *Ignorance of Right* "at human Tribunals: For tho' it may poſſibly happen that a "Man is *honeſtly* and *innocently* ignorant of what the Laws of the "Land ordain; yet as the Judges cannot diſcern whether he "ſpeaks *ſincerely* or no, they cannot take up with his Excuſe, "for fear of the Diſorders which might happen upon it; ſince "a World of Malefactors and Diſturbers of the publick Peace "might make uſe of the ſame Juſtification. Therefore to pre-"vent a general Evil, they will make no Exception to this "general Rule, *Ignorantia Juris non excuſat.* This may poſſibly "be unjuſt and very hard upon particular Perſons; but it is ne-"ceſſary to ſacrifice ſomething to the Good of Society.

"This is undoubtedly the Reaſon why *human* Tribunals "admit no Excuſe upon an *Ignorance of Right:* But let us "beware imagining that *God* proceeds by the ſame Reaſon: "As he is the *Searcher of Hearts*, he knows moſt aſſuredly, "whether ſuch or ſuch a Perſon be under an *invincible* Ignorance "of *Right*; and if he be, abſolves him as freely as if the Ig-"norance were only of *Fact*. *Bayle* Supplem. to Philoſoph. Com-ment. p. 589, 590. compare *Rogers's Review* &c. p. 104.

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would be obliged to judge according to the *Nature* and *Quality* and *Tendency* of the Fact committed, and not by the miſtaken Sentiments of the Perſon arraign'd. I return therefore to what I before ſaid, that in the Queſtion which concerns our Behaviour towards the Impugners of the Chriſtian Faith, we have nothing to do to conſider the *Sincerity* of the Men, but the Quality of their Doctrine. As to the reſt, God is Judge: And he will make all reaſonable and merciful Allowances for *unavoidable* Failings.

But is it not hard and ſevere Cenſure (may ſome ſay) to condemn thoſe *ſincere* Men who mean as *honeſtly* as we can do, and to make their *Guilt* the Ground of renouncing Communion with them[a]? I anſwer: This is not a fair Repreſentation. That they are as *ſincere* as we are in one Senſe, as *believing* what they teach, we admit, and it is nothing to the Purpoſe: That they are *ſincere*, as it ſignifies *impartial*, is the Point to be *tried*; and it depends upon the Iſſue of the main Cauſe. In the mean while, we make not their *Guilt* the formal Cauſe of condemning them, but their *corrupt Doctrine*, which indeed generally carries Guilt with it, but more or leſs according to the Circumſtances and Capacities of the Perſons. Therefore we ſay not how *deep* their *Guilt* is: Of that God is Judge: But this we ſay, that we ſhould our ſelves be

[a] See Sober and charitable Diſquiſition. p. 14. 23. 39. 40. 42. 44. 47.

guilty in a very high Degree, if we either taught ſuch Doctrines, or did not fully and plainly condemn them, refuſing Communion with ſuch as openly and reſolutely *eſpouſe* them. What we do in this Caſe, is not ſo properly damning Others, not paſſing any peremptory Judgment of their final Eſtate (to their own *Maſter* they ſtand or fall) but it is conſcientiouſly diſcharging a weighty Truſt, cautiouſly providing, firſt, for our own Salvation, and next, for the Salvation alſo of as many as we have any Concern with. If our Adverſaries be *honeſt* and *conſcientious*, ſo much the better for them, and we heartily wiſh they may be found ſuch before the high Tribunal. We approve of what *Salvian* very mildly and tenderly ſays, in reſpect to this very Caſe, ſo far as concerns all that conſcientiouſly, and in the Integrity of their Hearts differ from us: "They are *Hereticks*, "but do not know that they are ſo. In ſhort "they are *Hereticks* in our Judgment, not "ſo in their own: For they eſteem themſelves "ſuch good *Catholicks*, that they even throw "upon us the infamous Charge of *Hereſy*. "Such therefore as they are to us, we are to "them. We *know aſſuredly* that they are in-"jurious to the *divine* Generation of the "*Son of God*, in making Him *inferior* to the "Father: They, on the other Hand, *think* "us injurious to the *Father* in believing them "Both *equal*. *Truth* is on our Side; but they "*preſume* it is on theirs. We in reality *ho-*"*nour God*; but they *think*, their Opinion

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" does him moſt Honour. They are indeed
" *undutiful* to God, but this they eſteem
" a great *Duty* of Religion. They are *impious*,
" but they believe it true *Piety*. They *err*
" therefore, but they err with an *honeſt* Mind;
" Not out of any Hatred to God, but with
" Affection to him, deſigning thereby to ho-
" nour and ſhow their Love to the Lord.
" Though they have not the *right Faith*, yet
" they think they have a perfect *Love of God*.
" How they ſhall be *puniſhed*, at the Day of
" Judgment, for this their Error of a *falſe* Per-
" ſuaſion, no one can know except the Judge[a].
Thus far we can go in our *Charity* towards them: But our *charitable* Diſpoſitions towards their *Perſons*, ought never to bribe us to think favourably of their *Principles*, or move us to deſert the proper Defence of *Goſpel Truths*, or hinder us from declaring that the corrupting the Faith of Chriſt, is in its own Nature a *wicked* Thing, is *deteſtable* Practice.

It will not be improper here to make mention of a noted and uſeful Diſtinction of Sin or Wickedneſs, into *material*, and *formal*; one conceived to go along with the *Matter* of the Tranſgreſſion conſidered in the Abſtract, the other conceived to make the *Perſon* formally a Tranſgreſſor, and a wicked Man. I dare not ſay, that every one who openly maintains the worſt part of *Popery*, or *Judaiſm*, or *Mahometiſm*, is *formally* a wicked Man: I know not how far, *invincible* Ignorance, or

[a] Salvian de Gubernat. Dei, p. 105.

unavoidable

unavoidable Incapacity, or *unconquerable* Prejudices (owing, ſuppoſe, to *Education*, or to a Degree of *Enthuſiaſm*, or other particular Circumſtances) may be pleadable in his Favour: But ſtill, after all the moſt candid Allowances that can be made, I ſhould not ſcruple to cenſure his Opinions as *wicked*, (*materially* conſidered) his Doctrines *impious*, and his Attempts to propagate them, *vile* and *execrable*. They are truly ſo in the Nature of the *Thing*, abſtracted from the Circumſtances of the *Perſon*: And to a Man that has the full and free Uſe of his Faculties, and Opportunities ſuitable, they are Crimes of the firſt Magnitude, and ought to be cenſured as ſuch. The Gentlemen with whom I am now debating this Point, will not ſcruple to declare as much, with reſpect to the Doctrine of *Perſecution*, and they are very ſevere againſt St. *Paul*[a] for practiſing upon it, tho' he was, in one Senſe, perfectly *ſincere*, *honeſt*, and *pious*[b] (ſo far as concerned his then preſent Sentiments) in what he did. He went upon the Doctrine of the *Old Teſtament*, in Relation to *falſe Prophets*, and *Blaſphemers*, was right in his general Principle, but wrong in the Application. He acted not out of *Envy*, *Malice*, or other *ſecular* Motives, like the *Jews* who crucified Chriſt: A *new* Caſe happened which CHAP. V.

[a] Vindication of Mr. *Nation's* Sermon, p. 35. &c. Reply to P. C.'s Letter, p. 40. &c.

[b] *P. C.'s.* Letter to the Author of the Vindication. p. 38. &c. *Rogers's* viſible and inviſible Church. p. 24, 25.

he

CHAP. V. he had not conſidered, ſo well as he might: He was ſo over-officious to do his proſumed *Duty*, that he ſtaid not to examine ſtrictly whether it was *Duty* or no; ſo eager and impatient to *ſerve God*, in his Way, that he conſidered not, whether it was really *ſerving* him, or the *contrary*. This appears to have been his Caſe, and a pitiable Caſe it was. I queſtion whether the Corrupters of the Chriſtian Faith, many of them, could claim for themſelves ſo fair an Apology. Yet St. *Paul* was to blame, becauſe the thing was evil in it ſelf, and by the Uſe of due Care, he might have known it. The ſame I ſay of *ſincere* Teachers of bad Doctrines: The Thing is *Evil* in it ſelf, and, generally ſpeaking, They may, by a right Uſe of their Faculties, know that it is ſo. But whether They may, or may not, it concerns us not to inquire: It is enough for us, that their Doctrine is *falſe* and *dangerous*, tending to ſubvert the Goſpel of Chriſt.

IV. But it will be further objected, that we all along take for granted that our Doctrines are *true*, and theirs *falſe*: And why are we ſo confident in this Matter, unleſs we think our ſelves *infallible*? The Author of *Sober and charitable Diſquiſition*, is pleaſed to intimate, that though we will not *own our ſelves infallible*, yet *in Fact we avow it*[a]. He endeavours to prove the Charge thus, " In the Point in " which you are *certain*, you are *infallible*, " and wherein you pretend to be *certain*, you

[a] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 37.

" do

" do equally pretend to *Infallibility*: For *Cer-* CHAP. V.
" *tainty* is, *cui non poteſt ſubeſſe falſum.* You
" muſt have Evidence for a Point in which
" you pretend to be *certain*, not only to put
" the Matter out of Doubt, but enough to
" aſſure you a Miſtake is *impoſſible.* I am *in-*
" *fallibly* certain two and two are four——it
" muſt be; and cannot be otherwiſe; with-
" out ſuch Evidence there is no *Certainty*:
" And where Error is *impoſſible*, *there is In-*
" *fallibility* [a]. Nor can I ſee, that any Thing
" ſhort of downright *Infallibility* can juſtify
" the Behaviour (of the *Trinitarians*) if that
" can. But to diſclaim *Infallibility* in Words,
" and claim it in Fact, is too common a Prac-
" tice, though no very commendable one [b].
" It is queſtionable whether either Side have
" ſuch Evidence as will juſtify them in think-
" ing a Miſtake *impoſſible*; without which
" there is no *proper Certainty*; and if there be
" not, there is room for mutual Charity and
" Forbearance [c].

I do not think it kind or fair in this Inſtance, to bring in the Word *Infallibility*, where it has plainly nothing to do, only to throw an oblique Reflection upon ſome Perſons who are far from deſerving it: That is not a *ſober*, or a *charitable*, Method of Debate. The Sum of his Argument, when the Colours are taken off, is no more than This; that if we have not *Demonſtration*, as clear as in *Mathematicks*, or *Metaphyſicks*, on our Side of the

[a] Ibid. p. 37. [b] p. 39. [c] p. 38.

Queſtion,

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Queſtion, we ought not to inſiſt upon it ſo far as to make it a Term of Communion. Now, ſuppoſe we ſhould ſay we have, (tho' we ſay no ſuch Thing) yet would that be what the World has been uſed to call, *claiming Infallibility*, or *pretending to be infallible*? Would it not be very wrong to ſay, that a Man pretends to be *infallible*, only becauſe he is very certain that the Propoſitions in *Euclid* are infallibly true? Such an unmanly playing with Words is unbecoming in any Cauſe, much more in this. The Infallibility of *Science*, reſting upon the Nature of Things and the ſuppoſed Truth of our rational Faculties, is quite another Thing from *perſonal Infallibility* ſuppoſed to be an extraordinary Gift from Heaven, to a *Pope*, or a *Council*, or to a *Church* at large. Things ſo diſtinct, ought not to have been confounded. Whatever *Certainty* we pretend to, we reſt it intirely upon the *Proofs* we produce, for the World to judge of, and not upon any *perſonal* Endowments. How foreign therefore, and beſide the Mark, muſt it appear, to ſpeak of our pretending to be *infallible*? Indeed, the *Papiſts* have a hundred times told us, that we can have no *proper Certainty* without *Infallibility*: And if that were true, there's an End of the *Reformation* at once. The Ground and Baſis upon which the *Proteſtant* Name ſtands, and without which it would ſink inſtantly, is, That there may be a *proper Certainty* in Matters of Faith, Doctrine, and Diſcipline, without *Infallibility*. They that endeavour to ſap this

true

true Principle, undermine the Foundation upon which we reſt, and betray the cleareſt and beſt Cauſe in the World, to *Papiſts* on one Hand, and to *Scepticks* on the other. I take this Matter to be of exceeding great Moment, and therefore ſhall not ſcruple the Pains of conſidering it at large. I ſhall firſt repreſent the Anſwers which have been given to the Objection, (as urged by *Papiſts*) in the Words of our judicious *Chillingworth*: And I ſhall next conſider what Anſwer may be proper to give to the ſame Objection, in the main, as dreſs'd up anew by Adverſaries from another Quarter. Chap. V.

1. Mr. *Chillingworth* writes thus: "Though "we pretend not to *certain* Means of not err-"ing in interpreting *all* Scripture, particularly "ſuch Places as are *obſcure* and *ambiguous*, "yet this methinks ſhould be no Impedi-"ment but that we may have *certain* Means "of not erring in and about the Senſe of "thoſe Places which are ſo *plain* and *clear* "that they need no Interpreters: And in ſuch "we ſay, our Faith is contained. If you aſk "me, how I can be *ſure* that I know the "true Meaning of theſe Places? I aſk you "again, can you be *ſure* that you underſtand "what I, or any Man elſe ſays?——God be "thanked that we have ſufficient Means to "be *certain* enough of the Truth of our "Faith: But the Privilege of not being in "*poſſibility* of erring, that we challenge not, "becauſe we have as little reaſon as you, to

"do

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" do ſo; and you have none at all. If you " ask, ſeeing we may *poſſibly* err, how can " we be *aſſured*, we *do not*? I ask you again, " ſeeing your *Eye-Sight* may deceive you, " how can you be *ſure* you ſee the Sun when " you do ſee it[a]? A pretty Sophiſm! That " whoſoever *poſſibly* may err, cannot be *certain* " that he *doth not* err. A *Judge* may *poſſibly* " err in Judgment, can he therefore never " have *Aſſurance* that he hath judged right? " A *Traveller* may poſſibly miſtake his Way, " muſt I therefore be doubtful whether I am " in the right Way from my Hall to my " Chamber? Or can our *London Carrier* have " no *Certainty*, in the middle of the Day, " when he is ſober and in his Wits, that he " is in the Way to *London*? Theſe, you ſee, " are right worthy Conſequences, and yet " they are as like to your own, as an Egg to " an Egg, or Milk to Milk[b].

" Methinks, ſo ſubtle a Man as you are, " ſhould eaſily apprehend a wide Difference " between *Authority* to do a Thing, and *Infal-* " *libility* in doing it. The former, the Doctor, " together with the *Article* of the Church of " *England*, attributeth to the Church, nay, to " particular Churches, and I ſubſcribe to his " Opinion: That is, an *Authority* of deter- " mining Controverſies of Faith, according to " plain and evident *Scripture* and *univerſal* " Tradition, and *Infallibility* while they pro- " ceed according to this Rule. As if there

[a] Chillingworth, p. 99, 100.

[b] p. 104, 105.

ſhould

" ſhould ariſe an *Heretique* that ſhould call in Chap. V.
" Queſtion Chriſt's Paſſion and Reſurrection,
" the Church had *Authority* to determine this
" Controverſy, and *infallible* Direction how to
" do it, and to *excommunicate* this Man, if he
" ſhould perſiſt in his Error [a].

" The Ground of your Error here is, your
" not diſtinguiſhing between *actual Certainty*,
" and *abſolute Infallibility*. *Geometricians* are
" not *infallible* in their own Science; yet they
" are very *certain* of what they ſee *demonſtrat-*
" *ed*: And *Carpenters* are not *infallible*, yet
" *certain* of the Straitneſs of thoſe Things
" which agree with their Rule and Square.
" So though the Church be not *infallibly* cer-
" tain that in all her Definitions, whereof ſome
" are about diſputable and ambiguous Mat-
" ters, ſhe ſhall proceed according to her
" Rule; yet being *certain* of the Infallibility
" of her Rule, and that in this or that Thing
" ſhe doth manifeſtly proceed according to it;
" ſhe may be *certain* of the Truth of ſome
" particular Decrees, and yet not certain that
" ſhe ſhall never decree but what is true [b].

" Though the Church being not *infallible*,
" I cannot believe her in every thing *ſhe ſays*,
" yet I can and muſt believe her in every thing
" *ſhe proves*, either by *Scripture*, *Reaſon* or
" *univerſal* Tradition, be it fundamental, or
" not fundamental.—Though ſhe *may err*
" in ſome Things, yet ſhe *does not err* in what
" ſhe *proves*, though it be not fundamental [c].

[a] P. 105. [b] P. 125. [c] P. 133, 134.

" *Proteſtants*

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" *Proteſtants* believing Scripture to be the " Word of God, may be *certain* enough of " the Truth and Certainty of it. For what " if they ſay the Catholick Church, much " more themſelves, may poſſibly err in ſome " unfundamental Points, is it therefore con- " ſequent, they can be *certain* of none ſuch? " What if a wiſer Man than I may miſtake " the Senſe of ſome obſcure Place of *Ariſtotle*, " may I not therefore, without any Arrogance " or Inconſequence, conceive my ſelf *certain* " that I underſtand him in ſome *plain* Places " which carry their Senſe before Them? " ——We pretend not at all to any Aſſu- " rance that we *cannot err*, but only to a ſuf- " ficient Certainty that we *do not err*, but " rightly underſtand thoſe Things that are " *plain*, whether fundamental, or not fun- " damental. That God is, and is a Rewarder " of them that ſeek him: That *&c*——Theſe " we conceive both *true*, becauſe the Scrip- " ture ſays ſo, and Truths *fundamental*, becauſe " they are *neceſſary Parts* of the Goſpel, where- " of our Saviour ſays, *Qui non crediderit, " damnabitur.*

" I do heartily acknowledge and believe the " Articles of our Faith to be in themſelves " Truths as *certain* and *infallible* as the very " common Principles of *Geometry*, or *Meta- " phyſicks*: But that there is required of us a " *Knowledge* of them and an Adherence to " them, as *certain* as that of *Senſe* or *Science*; " that ſuch a *Certainty* is required of us under

" Pain

" Pain of Damnation, ſo that no Man can hope to be in a State of Salvation but he that finds in himſelf ſuch a *degree* of Faith, ſuch a *ſtrength* of Adherence. This I have already demonſtrated to be a great Error, and of dangerous and pernicious Conſequence [a].

" Though I deny that it is required of us to be certain in the higheſt degree, *infallibly* certain, of the Truth of the Things which we *believe* (for this were to *know* and not *believe*, neither is it *poſſible* unleſs our Evidence of it, be it natural or ſupernatural, were of the *higheſt* degree) yet I deny not but we ought to be and may be *infallibly certain* that we are to believe the Religion of Chriſt. For, 1. This is moſt *certain*, that we are in all things to do according to *wiſdom* and *Reaſon*, rather than againſt it. 2. This is as *certain*, that *Wiſdom* and *Reaſon* require, that we ſhould believe thoſe things which are by many degrees *more credible and probable* than the contrary. 3. This is as *certain*, that to every Man who conſiders impartially what great things may be ſaid for the Truth of Chriſtianity, and what poor things they are which may be ſaid againſt it, either for any other Religion, or for none at all, it cannot but appear by many degrees *more credible*, that the Chriſtian Religion is *true*, than the contrary. And from all theſe Premiſes, this Concluſion evidently fol- CHAP. V.

[a] p. 140, 141.——290.

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" lows, that it is *infallibly certain*, that we are " firmly to believe the Truth of the Chriſtian " Religion.—There is an abundance of Ar- " guments exceedingly credible, inducing Men " to believe the Truth of Chriſtianity: I ſay, " ſo credible, that though they cannot make " us *evidently ſee* what we *believe*, yet they evi- " dently convince, that in *true Wiſdom* and " *Prudence*, the Articles of it deſerve Credit, " and ought to be accepted as Things *revealed* " by God[a].

I have laid theſe ſeveral Paſſages together, drawn out of this excellent Writer: By which it may appear what kind of *Certainty* is profeſſed by *Proteſtants*, and how much the *Proteſtant* Cauſe depends upon that ſingle Article. The ſum is, that though we have not ſtrict *mathematical* Demonſtration for Matters of *Belief*, ſo as to make *Faith* and *Science* the ſame thing, yet we have ſuch a *Certainty* as leaves no reaſonable room for doubt, ſuch as is ſufficient to build *ſaving Faith* upon, and as much *Authority* alſo as is neceſſary to ſupport it. And thus we get clear of *Popiſh* Subtlety and Sophiſtry, ſhewing that there is a Medium, namely, *moral Certainty*, between *Scepticiſm* on one hand, and papal *Infallibility* on the other.

[a] *Chilling-worth.* p. 295. *alias* p. 254. Compare *Stillingfleet's* Rational Account. P. I. Chap. vi. 178, &c. 187, &c. 196. Chap. vii. 205, &c. Compare alſo Mr. *Cumming*, who has very fully and ſolidly treated this Argument. *Diſſertat. on Scripture Conſequences.* p. 61. —— 76. *Conſiderations*, &c. p. 315. —— 321.

2. No

2. No ſooner are we thus relieved on that Hand, but preſently we are attacked from another Quarter, and with the ſame Artillery as before, only a little differently managed, as it is now to ſerve different purpoſes. For here again it is alledged, that without either *Infallibility*, or *Demonſtration*, we can have no *proper Certainty*, nor any juſt *Authority* to declare Matters of Faith, or to inſiſt upon them as *Terms* of *Communion*: And the Concluſion here aimed at, or what muſt naturally follow, is, to ſit *looſe* to every thing, unconcerned for the Faith of Chriſt, cold and indifferent towards the great Truths of the Goſpel. *Deiſts* here, and *Papiſts* there combine together, to oppoſe the *Truth*, and Both Extremes meet in one. But let us examine how our *new* Adverſaries manage. Their whole Strength lies in one ſingle Dilemma, thus: "Either you "have *Certainty*, or you have not: If you pre"tend to *Certainty*, that is claiming *Infallibi*"*lity*; If you renounce *Certainty*, you have "*no Authority* to determine *Faith*, or preſcribe "Terms of Communion." We anſwer, by diſtinguiſhing the *Kinds* and *Degrees* of Certainty, and therefore do ſay, that tho' we claim not *Infallibility*, yet we do claim *Certainty* ſufficient to guard againſt *Scepticiſm* or *Hereſy*, and to maintain juſt *Authority*. CHAP. V.

I ſhall firſt examine the invidious Charge of our claiming *Infallibility*. The Author of the *Sober and Charitable Diſquiſition*, intimates, as before ſaid, that we diſclaim it in *Words*, but

CHAP. V. in *Fact* avow it. The ſame thing has been ſaid by a multitude of other Writers: I ſhall cite one only for a Sample, becauſe he has urged it as ingeniouſly and ſarcaſtically as a Man could well do, in a *Dedication* to the *Pope*. "Your Holi-"neſs is not perhaps aware, how near the "Churches of us *Proteſtants* have at length "come to thoſe Privileges and Perfections "which you boaſt of as peculiar to your *own*. "—You *cannot err* in any thing you deter-"mine, and We *never do*: That is, in other "Words, You are *infallible*, and We *always in* "*the right*[a]. It may hereupon be obſerved, how this witty Gentleman takes upon him to ridicule a very neceſſary Diſtinction, between an Aſſurance that we *cannot err*, and a ſufficient Certainty that *we do not err*: A Diſtinction, which the judicious *Chillingworth* laid all imaginable Streſs upon, perceiving that the whole *Proteſtant Cauſe* depended upon it. For if we cannot have ſufficient *Certainty* that in ſeveral things, relating to Faith and Worſhip, we *do not err*, how do we juſtify our Separation from the Church of *Rome*? If we are not *certain* that therein we *do not err*, then neither are we *certain* that ſhe *has erred*, and that there was a *juſt* Cauſe for leaving Her; but all muſt reſolve into Humour, Fancy, Fickleneſs, and unſupported Perſuaſion. It was this very Principle of a ſufficient Certainty, that we *do not err* in what we *prove*, which

[a] *Steel*'s Dedication to the Pope, p. 2.

reſcued

reſcued us from the Tyranny of thoſe who pretend that they *cannot err* in whatever they *define*. The Difference between thoſe two is ſo great, and ſo palpable, that one would think it muſt argue either very ſlow Faculties, or a perverſe Temper of Mind, for any Perſon to confound them. However, to give a more diſtinct Idea of the two Caſes, I ſhall endeavour to repreſent the Difference to the Eye in one View, in two oppoſite Columns, correſponding to each other.

Popiſh Infallibility.	*Proteſtant Certainty.*
1. The Church *ſimply* infallible in what ſhe defines.	1. The Church *morally* certain in what ſhe *proves*.
2. The Church *ſays ſo*, is the laſt Reſort, and deciſive.	2. Not becauſe the Church *ſays it*, but becauſe *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, by her Mouth declare it.
3. Submit to *Authority* in all Inſtances whatever: for Authority here ſtands for *Proof*.	3. Submit to *Authority* in ſuch Inſtances only, where you ſee no *good Reaſon* to the contrary; for then it is *reaſonable* ſo to do.
4. Abſolute implicit Faith in *Man*.	4 Abſolute implicit Faith in *God* only.
5. Examination *ſuperfluous*, and *dangerous*: Prove nothing, ſwallow every thing.	5. Examination allowed and approved: Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good.

Popish Infallibility.	*Protestant Certainty.*
6. The Subject obeys the *Interpreter* at all adventures, and submits as to an infallible Verity.	6. The Subject obeys his own *Reason* in submitting to what is *proved*, and what the Reason of Mankind ought not to reject.
7. Be a thing ever so *unreasonable*, or plainly *false* (*Transubstantiation* for instance) it must be received as divine, tho' a *human* decision.	7. Nothing ordered to be received, but upon the Foot of *Reason* and *Scripture*, with great Tenderness to *private* Judgment: only taking for granted, that our *Faculties* are *true*, and may in things plainly proved, be depended upon.

From this summary View, it may sufficiently appear, that there is a very wide Difference between the pretended *papal Infallibility*, and *Protestant Certainty*: And that as the one is contrived to introduce and perpetuate all imaginable Errors, so the other is undoubtedly the surest way to exclude all *pernicious* Errors, at least, and to preserve the most weighty Truths.

The Ground of what I call Protestant Certainty, is *moral Evidence*: Which, tho' it comes not up to *Infallibility*, or to the Evidence of *Demonstration*, yet is *certain* enough for all the purposes of *Faith*, or of a competent *Authority* to maintain *true* Doctrine. "Our Church, (as

(as a judicious Writer ſays) "no where makes "*infallible Certainty* of Aſſent a neceſſary Con- "dition of Faith, it being ſufficient to make "Faith certain, if our *Rule* be *infallible*, and "that applied with *moral Evidence*[a]. CHAP. V.

Moral Evidence, for the moſt part, governs the great Affairs of the World, while *rigid Demonſtration* ſerves rather for the Entertainment of contemplative Men, than for the Uſes of common *Life*. And ſince God has ſo ordered both our religious and ſecular Affairs, as to lay us under a Neceſſity of ſubmitting, in moſt Caſes, to *moral Evidence*, he has thereby bound it upon us as a *Duty*; ſo that if we have not ſtrict *Demonſtration* for what we *believe*, yet it is *Demonſtration* that our Evidence is ſuch as muſt command our Aſſent, under Pain of incurring the *divine* Diſpleaſure. As to the Nature, and Quality, and Force of *moral Evidence*, in general, I refer the Reader, for Satisfaction, to an excellent Writer, who has diſtinctly and fully conſidered it[b]. I ſhall content my ſelf with making only a few occaſional Obſervations.

It ſeems to me a Prejudice done to Religion, that the *learned* and *philoſophical* Senſe of the Words *probable* and *certain*, (ſo different from the common *vulgar* Senſe of both) has been ſo often made uſe of by *Divines*. When a common Chriſtian hears it ſaid, that it is only *probable*, not abſolutely *certain*, that Chriſt lived or

[a]. *Puller*'s Moderation of the Church of *England*, p. 142.
[b]. *Ditton* on the Reſurrection of Chriſt, Part 2d. p. 93, *&c.*

CHAP. V. died; or that the Chriſtian Religion is true, or the like; how muſt it aſtoniſh him, or afflict him? In the vulgar uſe of the words *probable* and *certain*, it is a ſhocking Thought; tho' in the *ſcholaſtick* Senſe, all may be right, as there is no rigid or ſcientifical Demonſtration of any Matter of Fact, or of any Article of pure Faith: And every thing ſhort of that the Schools are pleaſed to call *probable* only, not *certain*. If we were to hear any one, in ordinary Converſation, ſay, that it is *probable*, not *certain*, that there is ſuch a City as *Rome*, *Paris*, or *Conſtantinople*, would not the Man be thought mad? Or if he were to ſay further, that it is *probable* only, not *certain*, that there was once ſuch a Prince as *Alexander*, or *Julius Cæſar*, or *William* the Conqueror, or *Henry* the Eighth, ſhould we take him to be right in his Wits? And yet it is in ſuch a Senſe only, that Divines mean it, when they ſay, that the Chriſtian Religion is *probably*, not *certainly* true; underſtanding at the ſame time, that it is as *certain* as any antient Fact can be, fully, perfectly, indiſputably *certain*, according to what the World generally means by *certain*. I ſhould think therefore, it were better to leave off the *ſcholaſtick* way (which muſt needs give Offence, and which few underſtand) and to adapt our Phraſes to the common Acceptation, as alſo to Scripture Language. Look the Scripture through for the meaning of the Word *certain* and *Certainty*, and you will find that it ſtands for *Certainty*

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of *Facts*, which is *proper Certainty*, when properly proved: And it is but ſinking the Idea, and confounding common Hearers or Readers, to diſcredit it with the low Names of *probable* and *Probability*; which, in common Speech, ſcarce riſe higher than *doubtful*. I choſe to mention this the rather, becauſe I find that *Infidels* have taken Advantage of thoſe Expreſſions, to run down Chriſtianity as not *certain*, but barely *probable* [a]. And how that muſt ſound to a common *Engliſh* Reader, let any Man judge. CHAP. V.

I would obſerve farther, that the like Miſchiefs may ſometimes follow from an improper uſe of the Word *believe*. Were any one to ſay, he *believes* there is ſuch a Country as *France*, or ſuch a Perſon as a *Pope* of *Rome*, he would preſently be asked, why? can he *doubt* of it? That Expreſſion of *believing* commonly carries in it an Idea of *doubtfulneſs*, and is uſed to denote a *diffident* Aſſent. But when we would expreſs any Fact of which we have no doubt, we ſay we *know* it, or are *certain* of it. So here again there appears to be a difference between the Language of the *Literati*, and common Speech, while the ſame Ideas are not affixed to the ſame Words, here and there. However, this latter Caſe will not be apt to breed ſo much Confuſion as the former, tho' it may create ſome: Which might perhaps be prevented by the addition of an *ad-*

[a] See Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, Chap. xii. p. 184.

verb,

CHAP. V. *verb*, when we are ſpeaking of Matters of Faith, ſaying we *aſſuredly* believe, or *undoubtedly* believe thus and thus.

Now to return to the Author of *Sober and charitable Diſquiſition* [a]. He objects to us, that we have not a *proper Certainty* of what we believe, like as we have of what we *know*, as that *two* and *two* are *four*. It is granted, we have not. Belief is not ſtrictly *Science*, nor Faith *Viſion*: What then? In his Senſe of *proper Certainty*, there is no Certainty that the Sun *ſhines* when we ſee it, nor that Fire *warms* when we feel it, nor that there is any ſuch Thing as the *Sun* in the Firmament, nor indeed any *material World*: For, I apprehend, Philoſophers are agreed, that there is no ſtrict *Demonſtration* of theſe Things [b]. Have theſe Things therefore no *proper Certainty*? Yes, they have, and ſuch as ordinarily makes ſtronger Impreſſions than *abſtract* Reaſonings, or *ideal* Speculations, and are more out of the reach of all *Doubt* to the Bulk of Mankind. So ſay I likewiſe of Matters of Faith; they have a *proper Certainty*, ſuch as Things of that Kind admit of, ſuch as is fitted to common Capacities, ſuch as the World is governed by, ſuch as paſſes for *undoubted Certainty* in common Language and common Eſtimation, ſuch as God has *ordained* for our Uſe, and has *obliged* us to follow, and ſuch as both

[a] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 37.
[b] See *Clarke*'s Notes upon *Rohault*. Part 1. C. 2.
[c] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 38.

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our *preſent* Intereſts, and our *eternal* Happineſs are made to depend upon. So much for the *Certainty* of Matters of Faith, conſidered in the general. CHAP. V.

As to the particular Point now before us, the *Certainty* of it ſtands thus: We are *morally* and *indubitably* certain of the Truth of the Doctrine of the Trinity. And tho' we preſume not to ſay, or to think, that we *may not*, or *cannot* miſconſtrue Scripture, yet we have many and ſtrong Reaſons to perſuade us that in this Inſtance we *do not*: And therefore it is *infallibly* certain, (as Mr. *Chillingworth* well argues with Reſpect to Chriſtianity in general) that we *ought* firmly to believe it; becauſe *Wiſdom* and *Reaſon* require, that we ſhould *believe* thoſe Things which are by many Degrees *more credible and probable* than the contrary. Thus have we *ſure* and *ſafe* Grounds to go upon [a]. And as we are in ſtrict Duty bound to receive it as a *revealed* Truth, ſo becauſe

[a] I may here obſerve ſomething of Mr. *Bayle*. In his *Philoſophical Commentary*, (Part 1. p. 337, *&c.*) After taking notice, that the *Romaniſts* have perpetually reproached the *Proteſtants* as deſtitute of any *well-grounded Certainty*, and that the Proteſtants had anſwered the Objection a *thouſand times over*; he adds, that it never was *fully* anſwered, *never can be*, in the common way, only it may be irreſiſtibly retorted upon *Papiſts*: And the concluſion he at length reſts in, is, that God requires no more than *a ſincere and diligent ſearch after Truth*. Mr. *Bayle* is ſo far right; but he forgot to tell us, how we may arrive at a *well-grounded Certainty* of that Fact, that we have made a *ſincere and diligent Search*, without Prejudice or Byaſs, without any culpable *Sloth* and *Negligence* in inquiring, or *Precipitancy* in judging. There is no *mathematical*, or *metaphyſical* Certainty

Chap. V. cauſe it is a very *important* one, an Article of the *Foundation*, we are as ſtrictly bound to *preſerve* it, and earneſtly to *contend* for it: And becauſe one very proper Means of *preſerving* it, as well as of keeping ourſelves *pure*, is to refuſe *Communion* (according to the general Direction of Scripture in ſuch Caſes) with thoſe that openly impugn it, therefore a Neceſſity is laid upon us ſo to act, and woe is unto us, if we act otherwiſe. But we do not therefore ſay, as is unkindly inſinuated, *That there is not room left for mutual Charity:* For we verily are perſuaded, yea, and aſſuredly know, that our ſo acting is *Charity* both to the *Faithful* and *Unfaithful*, and towards all Mankind; and that the charging it as a Breach of

ty as to this Fact, which by him is made the main Thing. *Moral Certainty* is the utmoſt that any one can here pretend to, and that not ſo *great* as we can have of *Matters* of *Faith*; neither can our *Sincerity* be any way ſo *certainly* proved, as by the *Evidence* we produce for the Doctrines we maintain. Therefore Mr. *Bayle* commits a Fallacy, or is guilty of great Forgetfulneſs, in making a *well-grounded* Certainty of our *Sincerity* the laſt Reſource, rather than the other; for generally ſpeaking, it is not ſo *ſure* or ſo *firm* a Ground to reſt on, as the *Reaſons* of Things, or the *Merits* of a Cauſe. For, conſidering how *obſcure* the Search is into the inmoſt Springs of Action, or Perſuaſion, which are very involved and intricate, how *careleſs* Men are apt to be in the Examination, and how liable alſo to be impoſed upon by *Self-flattery*; I ſay, theſe Things conſidered, it is much *ſafer* to rely upon the *moral Certainty* appearing in Things, than upon any pretended Certainty we may conceive of our own *Sincerity*. I believe, the Fallacy in this Caſe has been chiefly owing to the equivocal Meaning of the Word *Sincerity:* For becauſe in one Senſe, as oppoſed to *Hypocriſy*, a Man may eaſily *know* he is *ſincere* when he is ſo; it has been too haſtily concluded, that he may as eaſily *know* it in the other Senſe of the Word, as oppoſed to *Prejudice* or *Partiality*.

Charity, is hard and *uncharitable* Cenſure, is judging according to *Appearance* only, not according to *Truth*. CHAP. V.

All depends upon this, that Men take care, in every Thing of Moment, to go upon *ſure Grounds*, to *know* what they do. That is the very Thing which chiefly diſtinguiſhes *Reſolution* from *Obſtinacy*, *Orthodoxy* from *Hereſy*, *Wiſdom* from *Raſhneſs*, and *Righteouſneſs* from *Iniquity*. God has given us *rational* Faculties to diſcern *Truth* from *Error*, and *Right* from *Wrong*: And we ought to be well *aſſured*, in whatſoever we teach, as of Moment, that we have made that uſe of our Faculties which we *ought* to have done, to diſcern between Good and Evil. It is not our *Perſuaſion* that can juſtify us, there are many *fond* Perſuaſions; and we are not commanded merely to obey our *Perſuaſions* (tho' we ought not to go againſt them) but to obey the *Truth*. It is not merely our *Sincerity* that can ſupport us, for of that we know nothing, in any juſt and proper Senſe, but by the *Right* and *Reaſon* of the Cauſe; and we are not commanded to hold faſt our *ſincere Errors*, but to hold faſt *that which is good*.

But what, will ſome ask, do we then pretend to *know* that our Doctrine is true? Is *Faith* advanced into *Knowledge*? To this I anſwer, that we *know*, not *ſcientifically*, but with *moral* Certainty, which is *knowing* according to uſe of common Speech; and tho' we do not ſtrictly *know* what we merely *believe*, yet we *know* that we have ſuch *moral* Evidence for what

CHAP. V. what we believe, as binds us to the Belief of it. In this Sense, we *know* what we do, and we have a *well-grounded* Assurance, that what we do is *right*, which is our Justification. And this is what we ought always to have (I speak more particularly of *Guides* and *Teachers*) in Points of *Importance*, and where it is not allowed to *suspend*. Cannot we *know*, for Instance, that a *Deist* is rash in rejecting all *revealed Religion*? Yes, we *know* it as certainly, as that it would be rash to deny, that there is any such City as *Rome*, or *Constantinople*; or that there ever were such Men as *Virgil*, *Horace*, or *Cicero*. Cannot we *know* that a *Jew* is much in the wrong, to deny that the *Messias* is come? Yes we *know* it as assuredly, as that a Man would be in the wrong to deny that the twelve *Cæsars* lived some Centuries ago. Cannot we *know* that the Popish Doctrines of *Transubstantiation*, *Image-worship*, Service in an *unknown* Tongue, and the like, are not *primitive Christianity*? Yea, we *know* it as evidently, as that modern *Rome* is not ancient *Rome*, or that *London* is not *Canterbury*. Cannot one *know* that the *Socinian* Interpretation of *John* i. 1. or of *Hebr.* i. 10. or of the Texts relating to Christ's *Pre-existence*, is not the Mind of Scripture? Yea, one may *know* it as certainly, as that a *Counter* is not the King's *Coin*, or that a *Monster* is not a *Man*. I give these Instances to shew, that it is not merely *Persuasion* or *Sincerity*, that we have to plead

for

for our Faith, but *Certainty* and *well-grounded* Aſſurance; ſuch as is judged ſufficient for *wiſe* and *conſiderate* Men to go upon, and conduct themſelves by, in *ſecular* Affairs of greateſt Conſequence. We have no occaſion for *Infallibility*, to ſupport us in ſuch a Claim: Common Reaſon ſuffices, taking in the proper *Helps*, and making the due Uſe of them with Humility and Care, with Sobriety and godly Fear *. Having gone through the moſt material Objections I had met with, I may now proceed to the ſlighter and leſs conſiderable, but diſpatching them in fewer Words. CHAP. V.

V. It has been ſometimes invidiouſly ſuggeſted, that our Zeal and Conſtancy in contending ſo earneſtly for what we call *Faith*, is bearing hard upon our Chriſtian Brethren of

* But here again it may be asked, may not a *Jew*, a *Deiſt*, a *Papiſt*, a *Socinian*, or an *Arian*, with equal confidence ſay, that he *knows* he is in the right? He may ſo, and probably will. Yet *Truth* and *Falſhood* have a *real* Diſtinction in Nature, and depend not on fond Conceits, or ſtrength of *Perſuaſion*. If any Man preſumes to ſay, he *knows*, when he does not know, he deceives himſelf, and is *guilty* before God; unleſs ſome *unavoidable* Incapacity, or *unconquerable* Prejudice, which God only is Judge of, makes him *innocent*. And in that Caſe it is not becauſe he delivers his *real* Perſuaſion (for it may be *impious* as to the *Matter* of it) nor becauſe it is *well-grounded*, for he only *thinks* it is: but it is becauſe of his *Infirmity*, which himſelf neither *ſees*, nor *knows* (if he did, he would correct it) that God acquits him. How much any of us may ſtand in need of ſuch merciful Allowances, we cannot ſay: But in the mean while, all we have to look to, or to truſt to, is to be as watchful and careful, that we go upon *ſure Grounds*, as if no ſuch Allowances might be made us. Such *wary Conduct* is well enough underſtood and practis'd in *Temporal* Affairs, where any thing conſiderable is depending: The like we are to obſerve in *Spiritual*.

Chap. V. an oppoſite Perſuaſion, is afflicting and oppreſſing them, and in ſhort, is *Perſecution* and *Popery*. It can ſcarcely be conceived, that any ſenſible Men ſhould ſeriouſly advance ſuch odd Fancies, or that they mean any thing more by them, than Rhetorication and Flouriſh. Yet certain it is, that ſuch things have been offered with a *ſerious* Air, and by Men of no mean Parts: I ſhall give ſome Examples. One writes thus: "The Humor of *Creed-making*, and "*Creed-impoſing*, is one of the *moſt grievous* "Inſtances of *Perſecution*, and the grand "Source of every other kind of it. If it be "only their *good Opinion* of us, that our fellow *Chriſtians* ſuſpend upon our non-Aſſent "to their *Confeſſions* of *Faith*, they in a very "*inhuman* and *unchriſtian* way, *perſecute* us. "It is in it ſelf *barbarous*, ſays Mr. *Marvel*, "for theſe Faith-ſtretchers, whoſoever they "be, to put Mens Conſciences upon the *Torture*, to rack them to the length of their "own Notions [a]." This declamatory Talk has been gravely, ſolidly and ſatisfactorily anſwered by a very good Writer [b]: And yet the Objector choſe rather to declaim again upon the ſame head, for ſeveral Pages together [c], than to quit his falſe Reaſonings, or acknowledge his Miſtakes. To ſay the beſt of it, it is a very wanton way of talking in a

[a] Occaſional Paper, Vol. ii. No. 1. p. 12, *&c.*

[b] Preface to the *Weſtminſter* Confeſſion, p. 96——104.

[c] Defence of the Scripture as the only Standard of Faith, by the Author of the *Occaſional Paper*, p. 35——40.

Subject

Subject of the laſt Importance, and is making a jeſt of the Liberties of Mankind here, and of their Happineſs hereafter. If thoſe Gentlemen have been ſo *inhumanly* and *barbarouſly* perſecuted, how is it that they have not yet aſſumed the Title of *Martyrs*, or *Confeſſors?* For, *Perſecution* and *Martyrdom* are a kind of Correlates, which ſuppoſe and imply each other. And what is that *inhuman* Torture, that *barbarous* Perſecution which they have endured? Have they had Trial of *cruel Mockings* and *Scourgings*, of *Bonds* and *Impriſonment?* Have they wandred about in *Sheep Skins* or *Goat Skins*, in *Dens*, or *Caves* of the Earth, for the Sake of *Truth* and *Godlineſs?* No, but good Chriſtians have *ſuſpended* their *good Opinion* of them, That is the Grievance. And for what? Not for *thinking* as they pleaſe (for Thoughts are free) but for Overt-acts of *Hereſy*, or perhaps *Blaſphemy*; for making *publick* Appeals to the People, in order to draw them off from liſtening to their better Guides, to ſeduce them from the *Faith* they have been baptized into, and to impoſe upon them ſuch Doctrines as muſt endanger their everlaſting Salvation. The kind and charitable Endeavours of good Men, whoſe Province it is to prevent ſuch fatal Miſchiefs, in the mildeſt and gentleſt way, (ſuch as Chriſt himſelf has preſcribed) Theſe are the *inhuman* and *unchriſtian* Perſecutions, which thoſe Gentlemen complain of. But to be a little more particular, They muſt not take it amiſs to be told,

Chap. V. in return to their odd complaint: 1. That they are guilty of a moſt intolerable Abuſe of Words and Names, in ſpeaking of *Rack*, *Torture* and *Perſecution*, where, even by their own Account, there is not ſo much as a Semblance of them: For it amounts after all, only to the *ſuſpending* our *good Opinion* of them. 2. In this way of giving *new* and *wrong* Names to Things, They may, if they pleaſe, make the primitive Churches alſo, and Martyrs, yea, and Chriſt and his Apoſtles, *Perſecutors*. The primitive Diſcipline, by their Account, will be moſt of it *Perſecution*; and ſo inſtead of ten *Heathen* Perſecutions (as they are commonly reckoned) they may increaſe the Number of Perſecutions to five hundred or more, and call them *Chriſtian* Perſecutions, or rather *unchriſtian* ones, for That, it ſeems, is the Name for them. 3. It is wrong in theſe Gentlemen, to furniſh the *Papiſts* with freſh Topicks for *real* Perſecution. For ſince it will follow from this Account, that *Perſecution* is *Scripture Doctrine*, it may be pleaded, that Papal *Perſecutions* differ in *Kind* only, or *Degree*, from the other, but in the main, are warranted by the New Teſtament it ſelf, and by the univerſal Practice of the Church in the beſt and pureſt Ages. 4. This will likewiſe be furniſhing *Infidels* with new Arguments againſt *Chriſtianity*, as it is a *perſecuting* Religion: For it is certain, that the pretended *Perſecution* here complained of, is ſuch as Scripture itſelf preſcribes, as I have before proved. 5. But to

come yet cloſer up to thoſe Complainants, let it be conſidered, whether they are not themſelves the real *Perſecutors*, guilty of that very Crime which they charge upon the Churches of God. To *revile* Men for doing their bounden Duty, to load them with *Reproaches* for *Righteouſneſs* ſake, to *libel* and *defame* them for maintaining the *Faith* of Chriſt in a *Chriſtian* way, to *ſeduce* their Flocks from them, and to demand at the ſame time to be careſſed and honoured as *Fellow Chriſtians*; Theſe are grievous *Impoſitions* and *Oppreſſions*, and may amount to *Perſecution*, properly ſo called. They that refuſe to conform to *Order*, who ſubmit not to *ſound* Words and wholſome Doctrine, who give unneceſſary Diſturbance, and aſſume more than belongs to them; they are the Invaders of Liberty, the *Oppreſſors* and *Perſecutors* of religious and righteous Men. CHAP. V.

It will be ſaid perhaps, that *Creed-Makers* and *Creed-Impoſers*, as ſuch, aſſume more than belongs to them. But if that be a Fault, it is a Fault common to all Parties: For they who impugn the Doctrines of the Church, are themſelves as much *Creed-Makers*, and *Creed-Impoſers*, by their *Appeals* to the People, and by their *impoſing* their own Doctrines on the Publick, in a clamorous way, (and generally with Satyr and Invective upon all that diſlike them) as others are who impoſe their Creeds in a more regular and authoritative manner. Much has been ſaid againſt *Creed-making*, by many who have as long Creeds

Chap. V. as others, only not the ſame Creeds, and who are as confident in dictating, and as dogmatical in defining, and as eager to impoſe their own Sentiments, as it is poſſible for Men to be. The Queſtion, properly, is not, whether there ſhall be *Creeds* or no; for all Parties are for them, under one Shape or other, and always will be: But the real Matter in Controverſy is, who ſhall have the *drawing* of them, or who ſhall *impoſe* them: And when Men declaim againſt *impoſing* of Creeds, the ſecret Meaning of all ſeems to be, that they like not that ſuch a Power or Privilege ſhould be lodged in any Hands but their own. However, the Fault lies not in impoſing *Creeds*, (where there is a competent Authority) but in impoſing *falſe* Doctrine for *true:* And therefore the Complaint is wide, while it runs only in Generals, againſt all *Creed-making*, and againſt *Impoſitions* at large, eſpecially as practiſed in the *Proteſtant* Churches. We pretend not to impoſe Articles of Faith in an *arbitrary* manner, or to require any implicit Belief in the *Church:* We require no Man to receive them for *true*, becauſe they are *ours*, but becauſe they carry their *Evidences* along with them, and will bear *examining*.

But it will be ſaid, that the *Proteſtant* Churches however, do determine beforehand, that every Perſon upon Examination, *ought* to find theſe Things true which they have formed into *Creeds* or *Articles*. They do ſo, as to the main Things, at leaſt, and where is the Harm? It is no more than preſuming that there are ſome

Things

Things ſo *certain*, that the Reaſon of Mankind *ought* to ſubmit to them, and that thoſe Things which they have defined, are of that Kind. To illuſtrate this Matter farther, we may put a few Caſes: Let the Propoſitions, ſuppoſe, of *Euclid* be given into any Man's Hand to examine, there will be no Preſumption in telling him beforehand, that he will find them true: And if he afterwards ſays the contrary, it will be no Breach of Charity or ill Manners, to tell him, that either he has not duly examined them, or is not ſincere in his Report, or labours under an Incapacity. Thus far will readily be allowed with Reſpect to Propoſitions of *mathematical*, or *metaphyſical* Certainty: We may reaſonably determine beforehand, in ſuch Inſtances, that they will be found *true*, upon a due Examination, where Capacity is not wanting. The like may be ſaid of an *Account*, which has been carefully caſt up, and *proved* by the never failing Rules of Art: If any Man comes after, and pretends to find an Error in it, one may be aſſured beforehand, that the Error is his *own*, and that he has been guilty of ſome Neglect in the caſting it up. Apply this Reaſoning to Caſes of *moral Certainty:* Some of them are ſo plain, that a Man may have as well grounded an Aſſurance there, as any where. Let the Queſtion be about the Truth of *Chriſtianity* in general: A Point ſo clear and ſo certain, that there is no Uncharitableneſs in judging that the Perſon who brings in a Verdict againſt it, has never fully

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and *ſincerely* examined, or labours under ſome unconquerable Infirmity. The like may be affirmed with reſpect to many particular Doctrines contained in our *Creeds* or *Articles*. There is ſuch a Degree of *moral Evidence* to atteſt them, that the reaſon of Mankind *ought* to receive them. Now, the impoſing ſuch Doctrines, in thoſe whoſe Province it properly is, is not *aſſuming*, but is diſcharging a weighty Truſt: And this is quite another thing from the *Popiſh* way of impoſing what they pleaſe, forbidding Men to *examine*, or ſo much as to *doubt* of what they *define*; becauſe their Church, they ſay, is *infallible*. Our way ſuppoſes that Men ought to *examine*, (if capable) in order to know that the Doctrine propoſed is *true*: And we judge, with Reaſon, that if they examine with Care, and decide with Impartiality, they cannot think otherwiſe of it. The Foundations we go upon are, that *Reaſon* is *Reaſon* with every Man; that human Faculties are *true*; and that there is ſuch a thing as moral *Certainty*, and that it is *Ground ſufficient* for the Governours of the Church to reſt their own Faith upon, and to hold out their Light to others committed to their Charge, and for whom they are ſo far reſponſible. Indeed, if the Church-Governours ſhould happen to adminiſter *Poiſon*, inſtead of *wholſome* Food, there will then be Reaſon for Complaint: But let not the Complaint run againſt *Creed-making*, or *Creed-impoſing* in the general, (which is foreign and impertinent) but let the Particulars be *ſpecified*,

wherein

wherein they have rigorouſly impoſed ſome- CHAP. V.
thing *falſe*, or at leaſt *doubtful*; and if the Charge can be made good againſt them, they then ought with the ſame Zeal to throw ſuch Article out, as they keep the reſt in. Upon the whole, there is neither *Perſecution*, nor *Popery*, merely in impoſing *Creeds*, &c. under pain of Church Cenſures, or Excluſion from the Miniſterial Function: But there is good Order and Diſcipline in it, ſuch as Chriſt and his Apoſtles have commanded, and the Church in the beſt and pureſt Ages has obſerved, and ſuch as is neceſſary to keep the Unity of the Faith in the Bond of Peace.

VI. There is another Objection near akin to the former, namely, that for Church-Governors to direct Men what to believe, and to exclude them from the Chriſtian Church, for impugning ſuch *Belief*, is *aſſuming* a kind of *Dominion over the Faith and Conſciences of other Perſons.* To which I anſwer; Men may call thoſe Powers which Chriſt has left with his Church, by what *invidious Names* they pleaſe, but they cannot thereby alter the Nature of Things. That Chriſt has appointed his Miniſters as Guardians of the *Faith*, and has empowered them to *excommunicate* the Impugners of it, is a very plain Caſe: And this is all that any Proteſtant Churches plead for. Whether it ſhould be called *aſſuming Dominion over the Faith and Conſciences of Men*, (ſince it is aſſuming no more than Chriſt has commanded) let the Objectors conſider. The Objection is worded in ambiguous Terms, which carry no certain or de-

CHAP. V. terminate Ideas: The very Phraſe of *having Dominion* over ones *Faith*, though a Scripture Phraſe, is of obſcure Meaning; and 'tis hard to know whether St. *Paul*, who has uſed the Phraſe [a], diſclaimed all ſuch Dominion, or only declined the Uſe of it in ſome Circumſtances. If it means, preſcribing to others *arbitrarily* for ones own Pleaſure or Advantage, not purſuant to Chriſt's Directions (as ſome interpret [b]) then St. *Paul* diſclaimed it abſolutely: But if it means only the Exerciſe of the Power of *Excommunication*, ſuch as St. *Paul* did exerciſe over *Hymenæus* and *Alexander* (for ſo others interpret [b]) then St. *Paul* only declined the Uſe of it in ſome particular Circumſtances. Whatever the Phraſe means, this is certain, that the *Proteſtant* Churches claim no more than a *directive*, or *inſtructive* Power over Mens *Faith* or *Conſciences:* Church Cenſure and Diſcipline affect only the Overt-Acts [c], the *ſpeaking*, *writing*, *teaching* perverſe Things, not the

[a] 2 Cor. i. 24.

[b] See *Grotius* and *Hammond*. [c] See *Whitby* and *Wells*.

[d] "The Laws of the Church regard only the *external* Conduct. They do not require the *inward* Belief of the Mind in "Articles of Faith, or the *ſecret Grace* of the Heart in moral "Duties. Theſe things the Miniſters of Chriſt *teach* and *exhort*, "but do not *command*. But the Actions which they preſcribe by "their Laws, are ſuch *external* Performances as are the *viſible* "Signs, the natural and proper Expreſſions of ſuch *inward* Acts "and Diſpoſitions of Soul, as *Chriſt* has commanded. And theſe "Laws they do not affirm to have any farther Obligation on the "*Conſcience*, than as the Performance directed by them is a proper Sign and Expreſſion of ſuch an inward Diſpoſition of the "Heart as *Chriſt* requires, and conſequently is agreeable and "ſubſervient to his Law. And when even the Action is thus "qualified, they do not pretend that the *Conſcience* is obliged by "their Law, but by Chriſt's. *Rogers* of the viſible Church, p. 101.

thinking

thinking or *conceiving* them: For, how can a Man be *cenſured* for private *Thoughts*, which no one knows but himſelf? But if any Perſons preſume to *teach* falſe Doctrine, and endeavour to draw Diſciples after them, then indeed they are accountable to the *Church*, as much as another kind of Offenders are accountable to the *State*. Chriſtianity is a *ſocial* Religion, and the Members of it are bound to ſubmit, in their external Behaviour, to the Rules of the *Society*, under pain of forfeiting the outward *Privileges* of it. And with what Modeſty, Decency, or Conſiſtency, can any Man claim a Right of *perverting* his Fellow-Chriſtians, as he pleaſes, and at the ſame time deny others a Right of doing what in them lies to preſerve their People from falling into the Snares laid for them? It is to very little Purpoſe for Seducers to plead, that their *Conſciences* are oppreſſed by Church-Cenſures, or their *Liberty* reſtrained: For would not the *Conſciences* of better Men be more oppreſſed, and their *Liberty* reſtrained, if they were obliged tamely to ſit by, and look on, while their Flocks are torn from them, not permitted to make uſe of thoſe *ſpiritual* Powers which God has put into their Hands? Either therefore let the Adverſaries be content to keep their Thoughts to themſelves, and then no Body can have *Dominion* over their Faith at all; or if they reſolve to uſurp upon others, and to take all Advantages for ſpreading *falſe* Doctrines, let them not be offended, if the Guides of Souls, whoſe peculiar Charge

CHAP. V. it is, uſe their beſt Endeavours, in a proper manner, to apply ſuch Preſervatives as Scripture directs in thoſe Caſes. This is not taking Cognizance of the *inner Man*, but of the *outward* Behaviour only; and that ſo far as ſuch outward Behaviour affects the Proſperity or Safety of the whole Community, and might be of dangerous Conſequence to the *Peace* of the *Church*, the *Purity* of the Chriſtian *Faith*, the *Honour* of *God* and *Religion*, and the *everlaſting* Intereſts of Mankind. Now, can the guarding, in a Chriſtian Manner, againſt ſuch fatal Miſchiefs, be properly or juſtly ſtiled affecting *Dominion* over others? Or is it not rather making uſe of a Power which God has given them, to hinder others from exerciſing a lawleſs Dominion over Chriſtians, and over the Church of God? Say, that the Church is *fallible*, what then? are her Adverſaries *infallible*? Or are they leſs liable to abuſe their *Liberty*, than the Church is to miſemploy her *Authority*? But enough of this.

VII. There is another Objection of more Weight than the former, namely, that the cenſuring of *Hereticks* may often provoke them to return the like Cenſures; and thus a kind of Reciprocation of Cenſures may be carried on to the great Diſturbance of the Publick Peace, and the Deſtruction of Chriſtian Charity. A late Writer expreſſes the Thing in a very lively Manner, but ſomewhat over-ſtrained, thus: " May not *Arians*, in their Turn, " think you guilty of as great Sin, in oppoſing

" what

" what they call the Truth? And may not Chriſtians, on all Sides, in ſo great and indeed neceſſary Difference of Opinions, rant and bluſter againſt one another for the ſame Reaſon, and bring their conſtant Accuſations againſt thoſe who cannot think and ſay as they do, for *denying* the Faith; or againſt thoſe who have the ſame Notions with themſelves, for *betraying* it? But what then? would not Chriſtian Churches become Cock-pits, or Fencing-ſtages [a]? In Reply to what is here urged, I will not ſo far diſguiſe my Sentiments, as not to allow that it is a Conſideration of ſome Moment: But yet there are other Conſiderations of ſtill greater Moment, which muſt preponderate, and weigh down the Scale. It is very certain, that *ungodly* Men, for a Cloke, will make uſe of the ſame Pleas, and claim the ſame Privileges, as *righteous* Men do: And an *erroneous* Conſcience may honeſtly (if *invincibly* ignorant) uſurp the ſame Rights which a well-grounded Faith has a clear Title to. But ſtill there is a very wide Difference between *True* and *Falſe*, between *Right* and *Wrong*: And it is no Argument againſt the *Uſe* of proper Methods in a *righteous* Cauſe, that others may *abuſe* the ſame Methods in a Cauſe of a very contrary Nature and Quality. But I ſhall debate this Point more diſtinctly, both from *Scripture* and *Reaſon*, as it is a Point of ſome Moment.

1. Let us conſider what Light we can have

[a] Reply to Mr. *P. C.*'s Letter, p. 44.

from

CHAP. V. from Scripture. It is Fact, that the Power of *Excommunication* began to be miſemployed, and to be turn'd againſt the Church itſelf, even in the Times of the Apoſtles: For *Diotrephes*, loving to have the Pre-eminence, *caſt* ſome Perſons *out of the Church* [a], very unwarrantably, and even in defiance to St. *John* himſelf: Yet that *Uſurpation* of Power, or *Abuſe* of Power, did not move St. *John* to condemn the *Uſe* of it in a proper way. So far from it, that he threatned to repay *Diotrephes* in his Kind, to excommunicate, or depoſe him, for his ſo raſhly *cenſuring* other Perſons. *Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his Deeds which he doth, prating againſt us with malicious Words* [b]. We may obſerve likewiſe from St. *John*'s 2d Epiſtle [c], and from the Charges given to the Churches of *Pergamus* and *Thyatira* [d], that the Uſe of *Excommunication* was to be retain'd in the Church, and was recommended from Heaven by our Lord himſelf. And if it be ſaid, that the *Nicolaitans* were an abominable Sect, That alters not the Caſe at all, ſo far as the preſent Objection is concern'd: For, the more wicked any Sect was, the more likely to retaliate upon the Church, and to make all poſſible Diſturbance, when provoked to it. Notwithſtanding all which, That accidental Inconvenience, of a Miſapplication of Power, was not judged conſiderable enough to

[a] 3 *John* 10.
[b] 3 *John* 10. See Biſhop *Potter* on Church Government, p. 380. [c] 2 *John* 10, 11. [d] *Revel.* ii. 14, 15, 20.

counter-

counterbalance the great Advantages and important Uſes of the ſame Power rightly employed. And as we have the Authority of an *Apoſtle*, who had the Spirit of God to direct him in what he wrote, and in what he did; This alone may be ſufficient to determine the Point in queſtion. For whatever we may be apt to imagine, (upon a ſuperficial, or limited View of Circumſtances) it is certain, that *infinite* Wiſdom cannot err, and therefore by that Direction we ought to abide. St. *Paul* ſeems to have left us a general Rule for all Caſes of this nature, in theſe Words: *Stand faſt in one Spirit, with one Mind, ſtriving together for the Faith of the Goſpel, and in nothing terrified by your Adverſaries,* [a] *&c.*

2. As to the reaſon of the Thing, it is a known Rule, that when there is a *Neceſſity* on one hand, it is in vain to plead *Inconveniencies* on the other. God has ſent Mankind a Charter of Salvation: It is *neceſſary*, above all Things, that this Charter be preſerved inviolable; that it ſhould not be falſified, perverted, fruſtrated. There will always be ſome or other, ſet on by the grand Enemy of Mankind, who will be labouring to corrupt and adulterate it, either adding to it, or taking from it; and if ſuch Practices are ſuffered to go on without Rebuke, there is an end of Chriſtianity. Here lies the *Neceſſity* of watching againſt all ſuch Attempts, and ſtrenuouſly reſiſting them; which cannot be done effectually without condemning the

[a] *Philipp.* i. 27, 28.

Authors,

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Authors, and in the laſt Reſult ſeparating from them. Hence may ariſe mutual Contentions and Bickerings: Let them bear the Blame who give the Offence, and are Aggreſſors in the Conteſts. Truths of everlaſting Moment muſt be ſupported, whether with *Peace*, or without. The Apoſtles were cenſured as Men that *turn'd the World upſide down* [a]: The Fault was in the *World*, and not in *Them*. Their Errand was *important* enough for the riſking ſuch a Conſequence. Our bleſſed Lord himſelf predicted what the *accidental* Effect would be of the preaching of the Goſpel; that it would *ſet a Man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt the Mother* [b], and ſo on; which perhaps, in Ridicule, might be called making *Cock-pits*, or *Fencing-Stages*: But the Goſpel was *worth* it, and carried more than enough in it, to make Mankind amends. As long as Religion is held in any *Value* or *Eſteem*, and meets with *Oppoſers*, it muſt occaſion *warm* Diſputes: Who would wiſh that it ſhould not? What Remedy is there for it, while Men are Men, which is not infinitely worſe than the Diſeaſe? A total *Contempt* of Religion might end all Diſputes about it, nothing elſe will: And even then Mens Quarrels would not be *fewer*, but *more*; only they would be about Matters of another Kind, about every thing they ſhould *value* or *eſteem*. Upon the whole, it is better, I ſuppoſe, that we ſhould have *ſome* Religion,

[a] *Acts* xvii. 6. [b] *Matthew* x. 35.

though

though we often contend about it, than to have *none at all*, and to quarrel ten times oftner about *Trifles*. It has been complained of, and has been thought to be a ſhrewd Remark, that *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* is made up of little elſe but *religious Conteſts* and *Animoſities of Churchmen*. But, pray, what is the *Hiſtory* of *Mankind*, but a Hiſtory of Wars and Contentions about ſomething or other, which they had a tender *Concern* for? And it would be ſtrange indeed, if a Hiſtory of *Religion*, the greateſt *Concern* of all, ſhould not contain many Conteſts. Who could believe that Men had *any Religion*, if during the State of the Church *militant*, and while there is like to be great *Oppoſition*, there ſhould be no *Warmth* or *Vivacity* ſhewn in Defence of it? But this I have hinted more than once already. Now to return to our Point. Tho' the *cenſuring* of Men that corrupt the Faith, may provoke, may increaſe ill Blood, *&c.* yet it *muſt* be done: And to decline it, when neceſſary, is a culpable Moderation, a blameable Timidity. And it is farther to be conſider'd, that tho' rejecting ſome Perſons from the Communion of the Church, may inflame the Quarrel between the Church and its Adverſaries, yet it tends to preſerve and promote the *Peace* of its Members within: Therefore St. *Paul* preſcribes this very Remedy, for the ſecuring the *Peace* of the Church: *Mark them which cauſe Diviſions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which*

CHAP. V. *which ye have learn'd, and avoid them* [a]. So that tho' in ſome Senſe or Reſpect, ſtrict Order and Diſcipline may *accidentally* heighten Differences, yet its true and natural Tendency is *Peace*; which it ſerves and promotes in one View, much more than it obſtructs or diſſerves it in another. The *Objection* therefore is grounded upon a falſe Preſumption, that *Peace* ſuffers *upon the whole*, by ſuch Conduct; which we deny: For, upon a juſt ballancing of the Account, Peace is very much befriended by it [b], and true and proper *Chriſtian Peace* could not long ſubſiſt without it.

However, I allow there is ſo much Weight in the Objection, which I have been anſwering, that the Conſideration of it ought to make us exceeding cautious and deliberate, as to the Steps we take, and the Heights we proceed to, in all Caſes of that Nature: Not to multiply *Neceſſaries* without, or beyond Reaſon; not to divide upon indifferent *Rites*, *Cuſtoms*, *Ceremonies*, as Pope *Victor* is known to have done; nor upon *dubious* Points of Diſcipline, as Pope *Stephen* did: Who had indeed *Right* on his Side, as to the Matter in Diſpute, but puſhed it too rigorouſly; and St. *Cyprian*, tho' miſtaken, was yet the *wiſer*, *humbler*, and *better* Man. Where the main Cauſe is both *clear* and *weighty*, yet even there many *prudential* Cautions ſhould be taken; not to ſuſpect any Perſons

[a] *Rom.* xvi. 17.
[b] See *Rogers*'s Review, p. 290, 291.

without

without ſufficient Evidence; not to be prying and inquiſitive into their retired Sentiments (*Miniſters* only excepted, or *Candidates* for the *Miniſtry*, whoſe Faith ſhould be ſtrictly inquired into[a], before they be allowed) not to proceed to Rigours with any Man, till all gentle Meaſures have been firſt tried; nor to break Communion with any who do not openly eſpouſe, and pertinaciouſly abet falſe and pernicious Doctrines. Theſe, I apprehend, are the prudential Cautions proper in ſuch Caſes: And there may be more of like Kind, which every Man's common Reaſon and Diſcretion may ſupply. If *Truth* and *Peace* can be maintained together, That is the moſt deſirable Conjunction which a good Man can wiſh for: But if human Affairs will not always admit of both, then the Rule is, out of two Evils to chooſe the leaſt, or of two Advantages to prefer the greateſt. Where *divine* Truths, and *human* Cuſtoms or Dictates claſh, we muſt *obey God, rather than Man:* In other Caſes, Civility and Tenderneſs towards all Men, is true Obedience towards God. It requires good Judgment to diſcern, under various Circumſtances, the true and preciſe Boundaries between ſinful *Men-pleaſing*, and Chriſtian *Charity:* But this is certain, we are as much (yea, and more) obliged to maintain the *Fundamentals* of *Faith*, as to keep up *Peace*. And it would be but an ill way to preſerve *Peace*, (if it might be called Peace) by forfeiting our

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[a] 1 Tim. iii. 9, 10. v. 22.

CHAP. V. *Chriſtianity*, or to enlarge *Chriſtian* Communion, by receiving thoſe who, in a ſtrict and proper Senſe, are not *Chriſtians* [a]. "Unity is "not to be purchas'd at ſo dear a Rate. It "were a Thing much to be deſired, that there "were no Diviſions; yet Difference of Opi-"nions touching Things controverted, is ra-"ther to be choſen than unanimous Concord "in damn'd Errors. As it is better for Men "to go to Heaven by divers Ways, or rather "by divers Paths of the ſame Way, than in "the ſame Path to go on peaceably to Hell. "*Amica Pax, magis Amica Veritas* [b]."

VIII. It has been ſometimes pleaded, in Bar to the Principles which we have before aſſerted, "That no one ought to be excluded from "Chriſtian Communion, whatever his Faith "be, provided he acknowledges ſacred Writ "for his Rule, and is ready to admit any "Creeds or Confeſſions drawn up entirely in "Scripture Terms". To which I anſwer, that a Man who never declares his Faith other-wiſe than in *Scripture-words*, is very ſafe from Cenſure, and can never be excluded from Chriſtian Communion for *Hereſy*. It is the maintaining Doctrines contrary to Scripture, in Points fundamental, which makes a *Heretick*; and therefore if a Man never *interprets* it at all, but barely repeats the Words, he is perfectly ſecure ſo far; and no one can condemn him. If

[a] Vid. *Suicer.* in voce Χριστιανός. p. 1540, 1541. Bingham. Antiq. B. 1. c. iii. ſ. 4.

[b] Chillingworth. p. 218.

this

this then be all that the Plea aims at, it is foreign and impertinent to the Cauſe in Hand. CHAP. V.

But if the meaning of the Plea be this, that tho' a Man teaches any wild Doctrines whatever, yet if he does but father thoſe Doctrines upon ſacred Writ, by any feigned and forced Conſtruction, (acknowledging Scripture all the while as his Rule of Faith) he ought to be received as a Fellow-Chriſtian; I ſay, if this be the Plea, it is ſo manifeſtly abſurd and ridiculous, at the firſt hearing, that it can ſcarce deſerve a ſerious Anſwer. For does the Faith of Chriſt lie in *Words* only, or in *Things* [a]? or is the repeating of the bare *Letter* of Scripture, after a Man has ſpirited away the *Senſe*, delivering *divine* Truths, or contradicting and defeating them? To make the Caſe plainer, I ſhall illuſtrate it by a reſembling Inſtance. *Franciſcus a Sancta Clara*, a known *Papiſt*, (who publiſh'd his Book A.D. 1634.) contrived to make our 39 Articles ſpeak his own Sentiments, reconciling them with great Dexterity, and moſt amazing Subtilty, to the Council of *Trent*. Now, put the Queſtion, whether upon his thus profeſſing his Faith in *Proteſtant* Terms, *popiſhly* interpreted, he could juſtly claim every Privi-

[a] Nulla vox divina ita diſſoluta eſt et diffuſa, ut *verba* tantum deſendantur, et *ratio verborum* non conſtituatur. *Tertullian de præſcript.* c. ix.

Nec ſibi blandiantur [Hæretici] ſi de Scripturarum Capitulis videntur ſibi affirmare quod dicunt, quum & diabolus de ſcripturis aliqua ſit loquutus; & ſcripturæ non in legendo conſiſtant, ſed in intelligendo. *Hieronym. dial. adv. Lucifer.* p. 386.

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lege of a Church of *England* Man, and whether we were bound to receive him as a *Fellow-proteſtant?* A very little Share of common Senſe, I preſume, will be ſufficient to determine the Queſtion in the Negative. The like I ſay of any Perſon who interprets our *Chriſtian* Charter to an *Anti-Chriſtian* Senſe: He has no more right to be admitted as a *Fellow-Chriſtian*, than the other had to be received as a *Fellow-Proteſtant*. For tho' Both admit the ſame *Words* or *Forms* which we do, yet ſo long as they teach Things directly *contrary* to thoſe very Words or Forms rightly underſtood, they are chargeable with *falſe* Doctrine, in our Account; and their teaching ſuch Doctrine in a manner ſo *inſidious* and *fraudulent*, is ſo far from alleviating their Guilt, that it greatly inhances it. It may be ſaid perhaps, in the Way of Reply, that the famous Abbot of St. *Clare* knew that he perverted the true meaning and intent of our *Articles*, while Thoſe that pervert the Senſe of Scripture, may believe that they juſtly interpret it. If that be the Caſe, it is true that it will make a difference: But I have no Occaſion to conſider that difference here, being foreign to the preſent Point. For ſuppoſing the Perverters of Scripture to do it ever ſo wickedly and fraudulently, yet They may make uſe of the ſame Plea, that they are ready to profeſs their Faith in *Scripture-words*, and therefore ought not to be excluded from Chriſtian Communion. A *Valentinian*, a *Montaniſt*, a *Muggletonian*, or any other

other wild Sectary, by this Rule, might equally claim Chriſtian Communion, provided he does not reject *Scripture* it ſelf, and turn *Infidel*. Now, a Plea which thus manifeſtly overſhoots the Mark, ought to be rejected as an abſurd Plea, like as an Argument which proves too much, ought to be thrown aſide as worth nothing. Thoſe who *undeſignedly* pervert Scripture, ſhould have ſomething better to plead than their retaining the *Words* of Scripture: Otherwiſe their Plea reaches no farther than theirs does who *induſtriouſly* do the ſame Thing; for they alſo retain the ſame *Words*. Upon the whole therefore, a Man's retaining the bare *Letter* of Scripture, while he corrupts the *Senſe*, is no ſufficient Reaſon for receiving him to *Chriſtian* Communion. For he is not only chargeable with *denying* the *Faith*, as much as if he had rejected the Text it ſelf [a], but with perverting the *Words*, and defeating the *Senſe*, while he profeſſes an outward Veneration for Both. I cannot better expreſs this whole Matter than a late excellent Divine of our Church has done, in the Words here following: "It is not barely re-
"peating ſo many *Words*, but the aſſenting to
"the *Propoſition* expreſſed by thoſe Words,
"which Chriſt requires. —— The *Propoſition*
"affirmed or denied in Chriſt's Words, is the
"Doctrine of Chriſt. He therefore who will
"not believe the *Propoſition* affirmed in Chriſt's

[a] Tantum veritati obſtrepit adulter ſenſus, quantum & corruptor Stilus. *Tertull. de Præſcript.* c. XVII.

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"Words ought to be looked upon by the "Church, as an *Heathen and a Publican.* "—Let us take for inſtance, theſe Propoſitions, *Jeſus is the Chriſt; He was crucified; roſe again from the Dead:* Every Word and "Sentence of Scripture, in which theſe Articles are delivered, the moſt heretical among the *Quakers* will profeſs their Aſſent "to, but then they mean only this, that *Chriſt "is an Internal Principle* of *Light within them,* "that his *Crucifixion* and *Reſurrection* are nothing elſe but the *Mortification* and *Regeneration* of every Believer.——Now are theſe "the Doctrines of Chriſt, or are they not? "If they are not, if they are *contrary* to "the Doctrines of Chriſt, then the Perſons "underſtanding theſe Scriptures in ſuch a "Senſe, may juſtly be looked upon as *Heathens* "and *Publicans*, and, notwithſtanding their "readineſs to *profeſs the Words of Scripture,* "unfit to be admitted, or continued in the "Church[a]." Thus far Dr. *Rogers*, whoſe Words I take to be a juſt and full Anſwer to the Objection I have been examining. The Reader will obſerve, that I have not been conſidering how far *Scripture-Words* may, or may not be proper in *Creeds, Teſts, Confeſſions*, and the like, and in what Caſes it may be prudent or neceſſary to expreſs the Scripture-Senſe in Phraſes ſuited to Times, Places, and Circumſtances: Queſtions of that kind fall

[a] *Rogers's* Review, p. 399, 400.

not

not within my preſent Argument, but have been largely and thoroughly treated of by Others[a]. All I am concerned to ſhew is, that if any Perſons are found to pervert the *Senſe* of Scripture in any notorious Manner, ſo as thereby to undermine the *Eſſentials* of Faith, their pretending a high Regard for the *Authority* of ſacred Writ, or for the *Letter* of it, is not reaſon ſufficient for receiving them as Fellow-Chriſtians. CHAP. V.

IX. There is one Objection more, which might have been brought in as an Appendage to *Objection* the *ſecond*, had I ſooner thought of it, but may conveniently enough have a diſtinct Conſideration here; namely, that the charging *Hereſy* as a Crime of the firſt Magnitude, ſeems to give too much countenance to the *ſanguinary* Proceedings of *Papiſts* againſt it. The Objection runs thus: "if theſe Charges "againſt them are juſt, and their Fellow-"Creatures have any Authority to chaſtiſe "them for ſuch Enormities, I cannot ſee why "the *Romiſh* Church ſhould be blamed for "*roaſting* ſuch accurſed Villians (as the *Arians*) "among other Hereticks. If we think a "Traytor againſt an earthly Potentate wor-"thy of *Death*, how much more one who "vilifies the Lord of Heaven and Earth? Is "a *Murtherer* of an earthly Father obnoxious "to Death, and ſhall ſuch a Viper as this eſ-

[a] Preface to the Weſtminſter Confeſſion. p. 105.——142.
Stebbing's rational Enquiry. p. 19.——56.
Rogers's Review. p. 395.——411.

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" cape[a]? If civil Power have Authority to " puniſh Hereticks, ſuch a Villain deſerves " far ſeverer Penalties to be inflicted on him, " than multitudes of others whoſe Injuries " to their Neighbours expoſe them, by our " Statute-Laws, to the Gallows[b]." The Sum of this Argument, ſo far as it may be called an Argument, amounts to thus much; That it is wrong to charge *Hereſy* in general, or *Arianiſm* in particular, with *Wickedneſs* and *Impiety* to any high Degree, ſince it is neither *Felony* nor *Treaſon*: Or if it be as *bad*, or *worſe* than *either*, then the *Papiſts* are juſtified in all their *ſanguinary* Proceedings, which among Proteſtants, is confeſſedly abſurd. To which I anſwer, that the Objection proceeds upon ſeveral *falſe* Suppoſitions, or Suggeſtions: As 1. That thoſe who plead only for *Spiritual Reproofs or Cenſures* are pleading at the ſame Time for *civil Penalties*. 2. That the Magnitude of Crimes is to be meaſured by what paſſes in *civil* Courts. 3. That *civil* Courts look ſtrictly to the *Demerits* of the Criminal, and not rather to the *Neceſſities* of State. In Oppoſition to theſe and the like Miſtakes, I obſerve:

1. That *Scripture* itſelf warrants and commands ſpiritual Reproofs and Cenſures; which is a Point very foreign to that of *civil* Penalties. St. *Jude*, St. *Peter*, St. *John*, St. *Paul*, and *Chriſt* himſelf are often very ſharp and

[a] Vindication of Mr. *Nation*'s Sermon. p. 12. Compare Mr. *P. C.*'s Letter in anſwer. p. 23, 24.

[b] Reply to Mr. *P. C.*'s Letter. p. 21.

poignant

poignant in their *Reproofs*, and *Cenſures*, where they had no thought of expoſing the Offenders to *civil* Penalties, or of juſtifying any *ſanguinary* Proceedings. St. *Jude* ſcruples not to call the Hereticks of his time *ungodly Men*, Deniers *of the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Filthy Dreamers, Deſpiſers of Dominion*, Followers of *Cain, Balaam*, and *Core, Raging Waves of the Sea, foaming out their own Shame, wandring Stars to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever*: And yet amidſt all this ſevere but juſt Reproof, or Satyr, I preſume, he never would have adviſed the correcting them by *Fire* and *Faggot*. St. *Peter* treats the ſame Men with the like ſharpneſs of Style, in his *ſecond Epiſtle:* But it would be injurious to conclude from thence, that he was for *ſanguinary* Meaſures. St. *John*, in his *Epiſtles*, gives very hard Names to Hereticks, calling them *Antichriſts*, &c. yet this does not prove, that he was for uſing any *violent* Methods with them. St. *Paul* deſcribes the Heretics of his Time in very black Characters, ſuch as they deſerved, yea, and pronounced them *accurſed*; and yet it does not appear that he wou'd have approved the *roaſting* of them, had they been much greater *Villains* than they were. *Shaming* them, *humbling* them, and bringing them to *Repentance*, that their *Souls might be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus*, was the utmoſt hurt he intended them. Our bleſſed Lord himſelf rebuked many with great ſharpneſs, calling them *Hypocrites, blind Guides, Children*

dren of Hell, Fools, whited Sepulchres, Serpents, Vipers[1], and the like: And yet it does not appear, that he would have approved any violent and ſanguinary Proceedings with thoſe very Perſons. Therefore it is wrong to furniſh the *Romaniſts* with Arguments for their *Cruelties*; as if *civil* Penalties were *juſt* wherever ſmart *Rebukes* are proper, or as if it were warrantable to puniſh according to the *Degree* of Wickedneſs, tho' the Wickedneſs be of ſuch a Kind as falls not properly under *civil* Cognizance.

2. There may be Crimes much greater than *Felony* or *Treaſon*; ſuch as *Apoſtaſy*, (which is *crucifying the Son of God afreſh, and putting him to an open Shame*) *Blaſphemy* againſt the Holy-Ghoſt, and ſome kinds of *Hereſy*. Certainly, it may be lawful for Chriſtian Divines to ſet forth thoſe Wickedneſſes in their proper Colours, and they ought to do it: Tho' at the ſame Time, they may deſire that the Offenders in ſuch ſort may rather *live* to repent, than ſuffer *Death*, or any *civil* Penalties. And what if *Felons*, or *Traytors* againſt the State, be puniſhed with *Death*? It does not from thence follow, that they are the *greateſt* of Sinners; but Reaſons of Government require, that Crimes which more particularly affect the *State*, ſhould be puniſhed by the *State*: The reſt are left to the *Cenſures* of the Church, and the righteous Judgment of God.

3. And I muſt further obſerve, that civil Penalties look not merely at the *Demerits* of

[1] See Matt. xxiii.

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the Criminal, but the *Neceſſities* of the civil Community. Civil Governors do not, cannot obſerve any exact Proportion: God only can do it, in his final Retributions. *Theft* and *Murder* are Crimes of a different Magnitude; yet they are equally liable to *capital* Penalties. As to *Hereſies* of ſuch a kind, they may be greater Sins than Either, in God's Sight: But it is not ſo *neceſſary* for a State to take Cognizance of them, unleſs they break in upon *civil* Peace. *Felonies* hurt many innocent Men, who have no poſſible Way to eſcape: None can be hurt by *Hereſies* (after proper warning given) but by their *own Conſent*. And therefore if *Spiritual Cenſures*, Reproofs, Admonitions, and other the like Preſervatives be duly applied, thoſe are ordinarily ſufficient in Caſes of this Nature: For, if any after ſuch warnings given, will ſtill liſten to *Deceivers*, and run in with them, they periſh with their Eyes open, and may take the blame to themſelves. I mention this as one Reaſon among many, why *Hereſies*, tho' ſuppoſed to be Crimes of the firſt Magnitude, yet ought to be treated in a milder Way than Crimes againſt the *State*. And I ſhall ſubjoin another Reaſon to inforce the former, namely, that when we ſpeak of Hereſies as heinous Crimes, we mean as *materially* conſidered, not determining whether the Men are *formally* ſo wicked as thoſe Expreſſions amount to: Which again makes a ſenſible difference between this Caſe and the other of *Felonies* or *Treaſons*, where the Offenders

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I have now finiſhed what I intended as to the argumentative Part: But it remains ſtill

to

to confirm the main Thing by the *Judgment* and *Practice* of the *Ancients*, who may be properly called in, and will be found to be of conſiderable Weight in the Controverſy: If the Scripture be plain to us now, in all Things *neceſſary*, the ſame Scripture was undoubtedly *plain* to them, and to them more eſpecially: And therefore, their *Judgment* or *Practice* cannot but be of *Uſe* to us, if it be only to render *plain* Things ſtill *plainer*, as there are Degrees of Plainneſs. CHAP. V.

After I had finiſhed this Chapter, I had the Pleaſure of reading Mr. *Ball*'s little Treatiſe of 33 octavo Pages, in anſwer to moſt of the ſame *Objections* [a] which I have been conſidering. If I may be allowed to give my Judgment of it, it is written with great Strength and Solidity, without Colouring or Diſguiſes, and is extremely well ſuited to common Capacities. One ſhall not eaſily find more good Senſe, and cloſe Argument in ſo ſhort a Compaſs. The *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition*, as I apprehend, was intended by way of Reply to that Pamphlet of Mr. *Ball*'s. But every diſcerning Reader who ſhall compare the two Performances together, will eaſily perceive the difference between *artificial* Logick and *natural*, between laboured *Subtleties* and plain naked *Truth*.

[a] An Anſwer to ſome *common Objections* made againſt thoſe *Miniſters* in the *Weſt*, who have appeared in Defence of the *Doctrine* of the ever *Bleſſed Trinity*, and its *Importance*. Written with all Plainneſs, for the uſe of private Chriſtians. By JOHN BALL.

Exon: Printed by *A. Brice.* &c. A. D. 1727.

CHAP. VI.

A ſummary View of the Judgment and Practice of the primitive Churches, in Relation to the neceſſity of believing the Doctrine of the Trinity.

THE very judicious and learned Bp. *Bull* has repreſented this Matter in the fulleſt and cleareſt Light, in a ſet Treatiſe, profeſſedly written by way of Reply to *Epiſcopius*, as I have before hinted in the Entrance. To him therefore I refer ſuch Readers as will be at the Pains to look thoroughly into the Subject of this Chapter; while I content my ſelf with giving a ſummary View of the main Things, interſperſing here and there a few ſlight Obſervations, which may be as it were ſupplemental to that great Work. There are three Ways of coming at the Sentiments of the primitive Church, as to the *neceſſity*, or *importance* of believing any Doctrine: 1. By conſulting the antient *Creeds*, conceived to take in the moſt *important* Articles of Faith, when rightly underſtood. 2. By obſerving what Doctrines were all along condemned as *impious* and *heretical*. 3. By collecting the Teſtimonies of *Fathers* declaring their *own* Sentiments, or the *Church*'s, or both, as to what Doctrines are *important*, or what Opinions pernicious and dangerous.

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I. I ſhall begin with *Creeds*. Here it is obſervable, that the Doctrine of the Trinity, implicite or expreſs, always made an Article in the ancient Creeds: Nay, ſeveral learned Men have conceived, that in the earlieſt Times, it made up the *whole*[a]. *Epiſcopius* himſelf was of Opinion that the antient baptiſmal Creed was no more than this: *I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghoſt*[b]. He deſigned, by the Obſervation, to ſerve his own *Hypotheſis*, viz. that the divine eternal Generation of the Son was not inſerted in the Creeds from the Beginning. But he did not conſider how much at the ſame Time he diſſerved his own Cauſe another Way, by making the Doctrine of the Trinity ſo *important*, as to have been the *ſole* Article (if I may ſo ſpeak) or intire Matter of the firſt Creeds. Nothing can be ſtronger for that Doctrine, than that the ancient Creeds ſhould be comprized in theſe few Words: *I believe in God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt*; ſince it is declaring the Sacred Three to be the *one God*[c], and

[a] *Bull.* Vindic. Eccl. Cathol. c. iii. ſ. 3. p. 308. c. vi. ſ. 80. p. 331. *Wall.* Hiſt. of Inf. Baptiſm. Par. ii. c. 9. Sect 11. p. 491.

[b] Antiquiſſimum, quodque in prima Baptiſmi adminiſtratione jam inde ab ipſis Apoſtolorum Temporibus uſitabatur, hoc erat: *credo in Deum Patrem, Filium, & Spiritum Sanctum*; Nempè ad præſcriptam ab ipſo *Jeſu* Formulam.

Epiſcop. Inſtitut. l. iv. c. xxxiv. p. 340.

[c] Perſpicuum eſt in hac Formula, *credo in Deum, Patrem Filium & Spiritum Sanctum*, Vocem *Deum* ἀπὸ κοινοῦ ad omnes tres, nempe *Patrem, Filium & Spiritum Sanctum* referri. Quod Græci adhuc clariùs exprimunt; Πιςεύω εἰς τὸν Θεὸν, τὸν πατέ-

CHAP. VI. and recommending that Faith as the *prime* Thing, or the *one Thing* neceſſary, without which no Man could be a Chriſtian. B. *Bull* very juſtly obſerves, that the ſhort Creed now mention'd expreſſed the Doctrine of the Trinity in a clearer, cloſer, and ſtronger manner than ſome of the more enlarged Creeds afterwards did. For the inſerting of additional Articles, time after time, carried the Words *Son* and *Holy-Ghoſt* ſo far off from the Word *God*, that it might look as if that high Title, which belonged indifferently to all three, was there applied to the *Father* only: Tho' the Compilers of thoſe larger Creeds really deſigned the ſame *common* Application of the Name *God*, as before [b]. From hence therefore it appears, that allowing *Epiſcopius* the Suppoſition which he goes upon, in relation to the ſhort conciſe Form of the firſt baptiſmal Creed, yet it is ſo far from favouring

μα, τὸν υἱὸν, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα. Ita ſane hanc brevem Confeſſionem veteres intellexere. Hinc *Tertullianus* (adv. Prax. c. xiii.) communem Chriſtianorum de Patre, Filio, & Spiritu Sancto Fidem exponens, ait: *Et Pater Deus, & Filius Deus, & Spiritus Sanctus Deus, & Deus unuſquiſque. Cyprianus* itidem, &c. *Bull. Judic.* c. iv. ſ. 3. p. 308.

[b] Mihi ſane videtur in his paucis verbis: *Credo in Deum, Patrem, Filium, & Spiritum Sanctum*, magnam illam veritatem, nempe Filium & Spiritum Sanctum, *unum* eſſe cum Patre *Deum*, aliquatenus clariùs exprimi quam in fuſioribus quibuſdam Symbolis quæ ſubſecuta ſunt. Nam per additamenta illa poſt verba, *credo in Deum Patrem*, & Adjectiones poſt mentionem *Filii*, non repetita voce *Deum* in Articulis de Filio, & Spiritu Sancto, videri poteſt, et nonnullis viſum eſt, *Dei* Appellatio ad ſolum Patrem pertinere; planè contra mentem ac ſententiam eorum qui latiora illa Symbola condiderunt. *Bull.* ibid. p. 309.

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his Cauſe, that it makes againſt him; ſince That Form ſo worded carries in it a confeſſion of the *three* divine Perſons being the *one true God* of Chriſtians: And if the Creed in the firſt Age contained no more; then That very Doctrine muſt have been looked upon, from the Beginning, as the Sum and Subſtance of Chriſtianity. CHAP. VI.

As to the Queſtion about the *Length* of the Apoſtolical Creeds, or the *Number* of Articles They contained, learned Men may offer their Conjectures, and have done it [a]: But perhaps, after all, we have not ſufficient Light to determine any thing with *Certainty*. What I at preſent apprehend of that Matter, I ſhall expreſs diſtinctly, in the Particulars here following. 1. It appears to me not improbable, that the earlieſt Creeds, as they took their Riſe from the Form of Baptiſm, contained little or nothing beyond it. There is a ſhort Creed of that kind ſtill extant in *Cyril* [b], comprehending but one ſingle Article, beſides the Article of the Trinity. And I may obſerve, that the ſhorter Form of the *Roman* Creed, (called the *Apoſtle's*) publiſhed by *Uſher* [c], ſeems to

[a] *See* Critical Hiſtory of the Creed, p. 33, *&c.*
Grabe in Annotatis ad *Bulli* Judic. c. 4, 5, 6.
Bingham, Eccleſ. Antiq. l. x. c. iii. Sect. 7.
Rogers's Review, *&c.* p. 261. —— 271.
Berriman's hiſtorical Account, *&c.* p. 21, *&c.*
Buddei Iſagoge, Vol. i. p. 441, *&c.*

[b] Πιςεύω εἰς τὸν πατέρα, καὶ εἰς τὸν υἱὸν, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, καὶ εἰς ἓν βάπτισμα μετανοίας, Catech. Myſtag. 1. N. 6.

[c] *Uſher* de Symbolis, p. 6, 9.

CHAP. VI. carry ſome Marks of its having been formerly ſhorter, by its bringing in the Article of the Holy Ghoſt in this abrupt manner, *And in the Holy Ghoſt*: Words which came in very aptly in the primitive Form, when they immediately followed *and in the Son*; but which would appear abrupt, after ſeveral new Inſertions made between the two Articles. Wherefore to ſalve that appearing Abruptneſs, the Church afterwards ſtriking out *And*, inſerted *I believe* in that Place, making the Article run, as it does at this Day, *I believe in the Holy Ghoſt*, &c. This obſervable Circumſtance relating to that Creed, is a Confirmation of the Opinion, that the *firſt* Creeds (in ſome places at leaſt) were of ſuch a kind as *Epiſcopius* mentions. 2. It appears to me farther probable, that when the *Creeds* ran in that ſhort conciſe Form, yet the *Interrogatories* to and *Anſwers* of the *Catechumens* at Baptiſm, were fuller and more explicite. *Tertullian* takes notice, that the *Reſponſes* in Baptiſm were then ſomewhat larger than the Model laid down by Chriſt [b], meaning, than the *Form* of *Baptiſm*: And he refers the Enlargement of the *Reſponſes* to immemorial Cuſtom or Tradition. *Firmilian* of the third Century, ſpeaks of the [c] *Symbol*, or *Creed* of the *Trinity*, and of the

[b] Dehinc ter mergitamur, amplius aliquid reſpondentes quam dominus in Evangelio determinavit, *Tertull. de Coron.* c. iii. p. 102.

[c] Cui nec *Symbolum Trinitatis*, nec *interrogatio* legitima & Eccleſiaſtica defuit, *Cyprian Opp.* Ep. 75. p. 223.

preſcribed

prescribed *Ecclesiastical Interrogation*, and seems to make them *distinct*, supposing that the *Symbol* of the Trinity contained less than the other. But if the *whole* ran under the Name of the *Creed of the Trinity*, even That shews what was looked upon as the *principal* thing in the Creed, giving Denomination to the *Whole:* And it affords a probable Argument, that, at first, the *Whole* was comprised in it. 3. It is not unlikely, that some of the *additional* Articles might have been inserted into the Creeds, in the very Age of the *Apostles*, in Opposition to the *Heresies* then breaking out. This *Hypothesis* appears to me much more probable, than that such Articles should be inserted in Opposition to *Paganism*, or *Judaism*. It was needless to caution the new Converts against *Paganism*, or *Judaism*, which they had formally renounced: But it might be necessary to guard them against *false Christians*, who pretended to follow the same *Rule of Faith*, and to admit the same *Scriptures*. This Supposition much better accounts for the Article of *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, being so long omitted in the *Roman* Creed (perhaps for six or seven Centuries) tho' it was inserted in other Creeds, where *Heresies* gave Occasion for it [a]. And this also best accounts for the observable Variety in the *additional* Articles to the antient Creeds: Because the several Churches adopted

CHAP. VI.

[a] *See* Critical History of the Apostles Creed, p. 96.——106.

CHAP. VI. thoſe Articles which ſuited their then preſent Circumſtances, according as they found the Faith of Chriſt moſt endangered in this or that particular [a], by the *Hereſies* then and there reigning. I pretend not to propoſe this as *certain* Fact, but as a *probable*, or the moſt probable Opinion [b]. The ſum of the whole Matter ſeems to be well and juſtly expreſſed by a celebrated Writer, as follows: "Not long after "the Apoſtles Days, and even in the Apoſto-"lick Age it ſelf, ſeveral *Hereſies* ſprung up "in the Church, ſubverſive of the *Fundamen-*"*tals* of Chriſtianity: To prevent the ma-"lignant Effects whereof, and to hinder ſuch "*Hereticks* from an undiſcernible mixing "themſelves with the *orthodox* Chriſtians, as "alſo to eſtabliſh and ſtrengthen the true Be-"lievers in the *neceſſary Truths* of the Chri-"ſtian Religion, the Chriſtian Verities oppo-"ſite to thoſe *Hereſies* were inſerted in the "Creed; and together with thoſe other Ar-"ticles, which had without Intermiſſion been "conſtantly uſed from the Time of the A-"poſtles, were propoſed to the Aſſent and

[a] *See* my Sermons, p. 324, &c.
Critical Hiſtory of the *Athanaſian* Creed, p. 158, alias p. 285.

[b] Proxime illi citra controverſiam ad verum accedunt, qui Symbolum hocce (*Romanum*) ex ſolenni Baptiſmi Formula, qua baptizandi, ſe credere profitebantur, in *Deum Patrem*, *Filium*, et *Spiritum Sanctum*, enatum exiſtimant; ita quidem, ut ſubinde additamenta quædam, *Hæreticorum*, qui Eccleſiam turbabant, erroribus oppoſita adjicerentur, donec in eam, qua hodie conſpicitur, Formam exſurgeret, *Buddei* Iſagog. Vol. i. p. 443.

"Belief

" Belief of all Perſons who came to be bap- CHAP. VI.
" tized [a].

Now, to return to the Doctrine of the Trinity, it is very certain, That that always made either the *whole*, or the *principal* Part of the firſt Creeds: And therefore in every View, and upon all Hypotheſes, it muſt have been looked upon as a *prime* Verity, a *Fundamental* Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*. But it may be pleaded perhaps (as indeed it has been pleaded of old Time [b], as well as ſince) that the ancient Creeds are not *explicite* as to the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, in the commonly received Senſe. To which the Anſwer, in ſhort, is this: That tho' all the ancient Creeds are not equally *explicite* in that Doctrine (and good Reaſons may be aſſigned why they are not) yet even thoſe which are leaſt explicite, do however contain the main Doctrine briefly wrapped up, provided they are but interpreted according to the real Meaning and Intent of the Compilers, as they ought to be.

1. I ſay, *Firſt*, That all the ancient Creeds are not equally *explicite*; for which good Reaſons may be aſſigned, as ſhall be ſeen preſently. Some of the early Creeds are very full and *explicite* in the Doctrine, conſidering the Time when they were made, long before the *Trinitarian* Controverſy was come to any ſuch

[a] Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtle's Creed, p. 38.

[b] See *Auſtin* de Fide et Symbolo, c. i. p. 151. Tom. vi. *Bened.* Edit.

Fulgentius in Fragment. 36. p. 652. Edit. *Pariſ.*

CHAP. VI. heighth as it grew up to afterwards. The *Creed* of *Jeruſalem* preſerved by *Cyril*, (the moſt [a] antient perhaps of any now extant) is very expreſs for the *Divinity* of God the Son, in theſe Words: "And in one Lord Jeſus "Chriſt, the only begotten Son of God, *true* "*God* begotten of the Father *before all Ages*; "by whom all Things were made [b]." Expreſſions which ſeem directly pointed at the *Cerinthians*, and others, who in the earlieſt Times oppoſed the *Divinity* of Chriſt [c].

There is a Creed, or Fragment of a Creed, in *Irenæus*, which plainly enough intimates the real and proper *Divinity* both of the *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*. I ſhall cite ſuch parts of it as are moſt to our Purpoſe. "There is one God "Omnipotent, who made all Things (out of "nothing) by his *Word*—— not by *Angels* or "by *Powers* ſeparate from his own Mind; "for the God of all *needs* nothing, but by "his own *Word* and *Spirit*, makes, orders, "and governs all things, and gives Being to "all [d]." Here the Reader will obſerve, that the *Word* and *Spirit*, the *Son* and the *Holy Ghoſt* are manifeſtly diſtinguiſhed from all

[a] *Bull.* Judic Eccleſ. c. vi. N. 5. p. 325.
Toutee. in Cyrill. Hieroſol. p. 82.

[b] Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα θεὸν ἀληθινὸν πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.
Cyril. Hieroſol. p. 159. Conf. 114, 137, 149.

[c] Vid. *Bull.* Judic. Eccl. c. vi. N. 16. p. 330.

[d] Unus Deus omnipotens qui omnia condidit per *Verbum* ſuum ——non per Angelos, neque per virtutes abſciſſas ab ejus ſententia; nihil enim *indiget* omnium Deus: ſed per *Verbum* et *Spiritum* ſuum omnia faciens, et diſponens, et gubernans, et omnibus eſſe præſtans, *Iren.* l. i. c. xxii. p. 98. Bened. Edit.

Creatures,

Creatures, from all the Things *made*: And it is the known Doctrine of *Irenæus*, that the *Word* and *Spirit* are the very *ſelf* of the *Father* [a] in a qualified Senſe, reckoned to him, included in him. But let the Reader, who deſires fuller Satisfaction, take along with him Mr. [b] *Alexander*'s excellent Obſervations upon this and two or three more the like Places of *Irenæus*, and he will find how ſtrong an Atteſtation they amount to, to prove that the Doctrine of the Trinity, as now received, was then looked upon as the *Summary and Ground-Work of all that Chriſtians believed*. There is another *Creed* of *Irenæus*, wherein the *Divinity* of Chriſt, the Doctrine of *God incarnate*, is expreſſed in ſtrong Terms. *Chriſtum Jeſum Dei Filium: qui propter eminentiſſimam erga* figmentum ſuum *dilectionem, eam quæ eſſet ex Virgine generationem ſuſtinuit, ipſe* per ſe hominem adunans Deo, *&c.* Iren. l. iii. c. 4. CHAP. VI.

There is a like Creed in *Tertullian*, fully expreſſing the *Divinity* of God the *Son*, and obliquely intimating the *Divinity* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; which however is known to be *Tertullian*'s expreſs Doctrine elſewhere, in more places than one [c]. His Creed runs thus.

[a] Fecit ea per *ſemetipſum*, hoc eſt, per *Verbum* et *Sapientiam* ſuam: Adeſt enim ei ſemper *Verbum* et *Sapientia*, Filius et Spiritus, per quos, et in quibus, omnia libere et ſponte fecit, p. 253.

Fecit ea per *ſemetipſum*, hoc eſt per *Verbum* et *Sapientiam* ſuam, p. 163.

[b] *Alexander*'s Eſſay on *Irenæus*, p. 19. Printed for *J. Clark* and *R. Hett*, 1727.

[c] *Tertul.* contr. Prax. c. ix, xiii, xxx.

CHAP. VI.

" We believe in one God, but under this " *Diſpenſation*, which we call the *Oeconomy*, " that the one God hath a *Son*, which is his " *Word*, who proceeded from him, by whom " *all Things* were made, and without whom " nothing was made. He was ſent from the " Father to the Virgin, and was born of her, " both *God* and *Man*, Son of *Man*, and Son of " *God*——who afterwards, according to his " Promiſe, ſent from the Father the *Holy* " *Ghoſt*, the Comforter, the Sanctifier of the " Faith of thoſe who believe in the *Father* and " the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghoſt*. This is the " Rule which has come down to us from the " beginning of the Goſpel [a]."

In the next Century, we have the famous Creed of *Gregory* Biſhop of *Neocæſarea*, commonly called *Thaumaturgus*, on the Account of the many *Miracles* which God wrought by him. The Creed is as expreſs and explicite as poſſible for the Doctrine of the Trinity, drawn up probably for the obviating all Extremes of that Time, whether of *Samoſatenians*, or *Sabellians*. Some have queſtioned the Genuineneſs of it, but without ſufficient

[a] Unicum quidem Deum credimus, ſub hac tamen diſpenſatione; quam οἰκονομίαν dicimus, ut unici Dei ſit et Filius, Sermo ipſius, qui ex ipſo proceſſerit, *per quem omnia facta ſunt, et ſine quo factum eſt nihil.* Hunc miſſum a Patre in Virginem, et ex ea natum hominem et Deum, *Filium hominis* et *Filium Dei*, et cognominatum *Jeſum Chriſtum.*—— Qui exinde miſerit, ſecundum promiſſionem ſuam, a Patre *Spiritum Sanctum*, Paracletum, Sanctificatorem Fidei eorum qui credunt in *Patrem* et *Filium* & *Spiritum Sanctum*. Hanc regulam ab initio Evangelii decucurriſſe, &c. *Tertul. Adv. Prax.* c. ii. p. 5, 6. Welchman Edit.

Cauſe [a],

Cauſe [a]. I ſhall here ſet it down at full length, as follows: CHAP. VI.

" There is *one God*, Father of the living " *Word*, the ſubſtantial *Wiſdom*, and *Power*, " and eternal expreſs Image: Perfect Parent " of one perfect, Father of the only begotten " Son. There is *one Lord*, one of one, God " of God, the expreſs Character and Image " of the Godhead, the effective *Word*, the " *Wiſdom* that graſps the Syſtem of the Uni- " verſe, and the *Power* that made every Crea- " ture, true Son of the true Father, inviſible " of inviſible, incorruptible of incorruptible, " immortal of immortal, and eternal of eternal. " And there is *one Holy Ghoſt*, having his Sub- " ſiſtence from God, and ſhining forth by the " Son, [*viz.* to Mankind] perfect Image of the " perfect Son, Life cauſal of all living, the " holy Fountain, eſſential Sanctity, Author " of all Sanctification: in whom God the Fa- " ther is manifeſted, who is above all, and " in all, and God the Son who is thro' all. " A perfect Trinity, undivided unſeparated " in Glory, Eternity and Dominion. There " is therefore nothing created or ſervile in this " Trinity, nothing adventitious, that once was " not, and came in after: For the *Father* was " never without the *Son*, nor the *Son* without

[a] The Genuineneſs of the Creed is maintained by Biſhop *Bull*, Defen. F. N. Sect. ii. c. 12. p. 137.
Fabricius B. Gr. Vol. v. p. 249. opp. Hippol. Vol. ii. p. 224.
Dr. *Berriman*'s hiſtorical Account, p. 138, &c.
Mr. *Abr. Taylor*, true Script. Doctrine, p. 128, &c.

the

CHAP. VI. " the *Spirit*, but this Trinity abides the ſame, " unchangeable and invariable for ever [a]." This is the ſo much celebrated Creed, of which ſome Stories have been told more than we are bound to believe, by *Gregory Nyſſen*: But Miſreport in Circumſtances do not invalidate the main thing. I have incloſed a ſmall part of it within Brackets, looking upon it as a Marginal Gloſs, made by ſome ignorant Scioliſt, and afterwards foiſted into the Text. I owe the Obſervation to *le Quien*, who has confirmed it with ſubſtantial Reaſons [b], in his Edition of *Damaſcen*.

If it ſhould now be aſked, why other Creeds, elder than this, ſhould not be equally *explicite*, as to the Doctrine of the Trinity, or why the *Weſtern* Formularies were not as minute and expreſs, as ſome of the *Eaſtern*; the Anſwer is ſhort and eaſy: There was not the ſame Occaſion. *Hereſies* were more or leſs prevalent

[a] Εἷς θεὸς, πατὴρ λόγυ ζῶντος, σοφίας ὑφισώσης, καὶ δυνάμεως, καὶ χαρακτῆρος ἀϊδίυ· τέλειος, τελείυ γεννήτωρ, πατὴρ υἱῦ μονογενῦς. εἷς κύριος, μόνος ἐκ μόνυ, θεὸς ἐκ θεοῦ· ὁ χαρακτὴρ καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς θεότητος, λόγος ἐνεργὸς, σοφία τῆς τῶν ὅλων συστάσεως περιεκτικὴ, καὶ δύναμις τῆς ὅλης κτίσεως ποιητικὴ, υἱὸς ἀληθινὸς ἀληθινοῦ πατρὸς, ἀόρατος ἀοράτου, καὶ ἄφθαρτος ἀφθάρτου, καὶ ἀθάνατος ἀθανάτου, καὶ ἀΐδιος ἀϊδίου. Καὶ ἓν πνεῦμα ἅγιον, ἐκ θεοῦ τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἔχον, καὶ δι' υἱοῦ πεφηνὸς [δηλαδὴ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις] εἰκὼν τοῦ υἱοῦ τελείυ τελεία, ζωὴ ζώντων αἰτία, πηγὴ ἁγία, ἁγιότης ἁγιασμοῦ χορηγὸς, ἐν ᾧ φανεροῦται θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων καὶ ἐν πᾶσι, καὶ θεὸς ὁ υἱὸς ὁ διὰ πάντων. Τριὰς τελεία, δόξῃ καὶ ἀϊδιότητι καὶ βασιλείᾳ μὴ μεριζομένη μηδὲ ἀπαλλοτριουμένη. οὔτε οὖν κτιστόν τι ἢ δοῦλον ἐν τῇ τριάδι, οὔτε ἐπεισακτόν τι, ὡς πρότερον μὴ ὂυχ ὑπάρχον, ὕστερον δὲ ἐπεισελθόν. οὔτε οὖν ἐνέλιπέ ποτε υἱὸς πατρὶ, οὔτε υἱῷ πνεῦμα, ἀλλ' ἄτρεπτος καὶ ἀναλλοίωτος ἡ αὐτὴ τριὰς ἀεί.

Gregor. Thaumaturgi Symbolum apud Gregor. Nyſſen. in vit. Gregor. opp. Tom. ii. p. 978, 979.

[b] Mich. le Quien. in Diſſertat. Damaſcen. Tom. i. p. 2.

at

at different Times, and in different Places: And Creeds varied accordingly. The *Eaſt* was more infeſted with them, than the *Weſt*: And therefore the *Eaſtern* Creeds were larger and more explicite, generally, than the *Weſtern*. And when ſome Churches had formed their Creeds, and made it cuſtomary for the *Catechumens* to recite them publickly, they might not afterwards think it proper to alter the Forms which the People had long been uſed to, without the greateſt Neceſſity. Such is *Ruffinus*'s Account of this Matter [a]. And I may add, that there was no abſolute Neceſſity of enlarging the baptiſmal Creeds as often as *Hereſies* aroſe in the Church; becauſe the Defects of the ſhorter Creeds might be competently ſupplied another way; namely, by very particular Inſtructions and Cautions given to the Candidates for Baptiſm, in the Catechetical Lectures contrived for that Purpoſe: Of which I have treated ſufficiently elſewhere [b], and need not here repeat. CHAP. VI.

2. But I am further to obſerve, that even thoſe *ſhorter* Creeds, ſuch particularly as the

[a] In diverſis eccleſiis, aliqua in his verbis inveniuntur adjecta: In eccleſia tamen urbis *Romæ* hoc non deprehenditur factum. Quod ego propterea eſſe arbitror, quod neque *Hæreſis* ulla illic ſumſit exordium; et mos ibi ſervatur antiquus, eos qui gratiam Baptiſmi ſuſcepturi ſunt, publicè, id eſt, fidelium populo audiente Symbolum reddere, et utique adjectionem unius ſaltem ſermonis, eorum qui præceſſerunt in Fide non admittit auditus. In cæteris autem locis, quantum intelligi datur, *propter nonnullos Hæreticos* addita quædam videntur, per quæ novellæ doctrinæ ſenſus crederetur excludi. *Ruffin. in Symbol.* p. 17. *Edit. Ox.*

Conf. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. v. p. 312.

[b] Sermons p. 322, &c.

Roman,

CHAP. VI. *Roman*, tho' not ſo *explicite* in the Article of the Trinity as the *Eaſtern* Creeds, do yet contain the Sum and Subſtance of the Doctrine in full and ſtrong Terms; provided only, that they be interpreted according to the true and certain Meaning of the Compilers, as they ought to be. The Creeds of the Church ought moſt certainly to be interpreted according to the Mind of the *Church*, and not by any Afterthoughts of *Hereticks* [a]. For tho' the Scripture, properly, is the Rule for *receiving* any Creed, or any Doctrine, yet it is not the Rule of *Interpretation*; but Words, Phraſes and Formularies muſt be interpreted according to their received Uſe, and the known Senſe of the Compilers and Impoſers [b]. The very judicious Author of the *Critical Hiſtory* has expreſſed the ſame Sentiments very fully and clearly, as follows: "Although nothing contained therein, muſt "be *believed* any farther than it agrees with "the holy *Scriptures*, yet the *intended Senſe* "of the greateſt part thereof is not to be "fetched from thence, but from the *Writings* "of the *Fathers*, and from thoſe *Hereſies* a-"gainſt whom it (the *Creed*) was deſigned:

[a] Quid refert ſi quis heſternus *Hæreticus* verba aliter explicari poſſe contendat? Symbola certe *Eccleſiæ* ex ipſo *Eccleſiæ* ſenſu, non ex Hæreticorum cerebello exponenda ſint. Quod poſterius ſi fieret, Deum immortalem! quam cito, ex omnibus Fidei noſtræ Articulis, ne unus quidem nobis ſatis ſanus atque integer relinqueretur. Symbola Eccleſiæ non tenet qui aliter quam Eccleſia intelligit. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. v. p. 322.

[b] See *the Caſe of Arian Subſcription* conſidered, p. 19, 20. *Remarks* on Dr. *Clarke*'s Expoſition of the Catechiſm, p. 25. Edit. 3d.

"which

" Which Expreſſion may, at the firſt hearing, " be perhaps eſteemed by ſome too haſty and " inconſiderate: But the Nature of the Thing, " well reflected on, makes it evident and be- " yond Contradiction. And if the Authority " of others before me will be more valued, " and better received, it will be no difficult " Taſk to produce ſeveral who have affirmed " the ſame Thing. But at preſent, I ſhall " content my ſelf with the Teſtimony of Mon- " ſieur *Jurieu*, a *French* Divine now living, " who writes in expreſs Terms, That for his " part, *he is perſuaded, that we muſt not ſeek* " *the* SENSE of the Articles of the Apoſtles " *Creed in the* SCRIPTURES, *but in the* INTEN- " TION of thoſe that compoſed it[a].

From what has been ſaid, it ought to be admitted as a clear Caſe, or a ruled Point, that the Creeds of the *Church* ſhould be interpreted according to the Mind of the *Church*; and the Mind of the Church is to be learned chiefly from the *Writings* of the *Fathers*. And while we proceed by this Rule, it is manifeſt that the antient Creeds, whether of the larger or ſhorter kind, do expreſs the Doctrine of the Trinity, as commonly received at this Day. The *Roman* Creed for inſtance, even in its ſhorter Form, (as it ſtood in and before the fourth Century) fully expreſſes the true and proper Divinity of Chriſt; indirectly, in calling the firſt Perſon *Father*, and directly in

[a] Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtle's Creed, p. 42. Edit. 4th.

CHAP. VI. calling the ſecond Perſon *only Son*. The very Name of *Father*, applied in the Creed to the firſt Perſon, intimates the Relation he bears to a *Son*, of the ſame Nature with him, exiſting of him, and from him, and with him. This is an Obſervation frequently occurring in the *Poſt-nicene* Writers, who derived it from the more early Fathers, as I ſhall make appear preſently. *Fulgentius* argues, that the *Divinity* of the *Son* is ſufficiently intimated in the *Creed*, by the firſt Article's acknowledging God to be a *Father*; in as much as *Father* and *Son* muſt be allowed to be of the *ſame Nature*, and *equal* in all eſſential Perfections [a]. *Ruffinus*, before him, argues in like manner, and ſo interprets the firſt Article of the Creed [b]. *Hilary*, before them Both, expreſſes the ſame Thought more than once, and inſiſts upon it as of great Weight [c]. The *Greek* Writers are full

[a] Cum enim quiſque ſe dicit credere in Deum *Patrem* omnipotentem, hoc ipſum quod in Deum *Patrem* dicit, ſicut in eo veritatem naturalis divinitatis, ita veritatem naturalis quoque Paternitatis, et ex hac veritatem etiam naturalis generationis oſtendit.— Totum igitur in ſe habet illa generatio divina quicquid in ſe habet Dei Patris æterna ſubſtantia. Proinde ſufficiebat ut diceretur de *Patre* ſolo, quicquid æqualiter intelligendum eſſet de *Filio*: Pater enim ſic *omnipotentem* Filium genuit, ſicut eſt ipſe *Pater omnipotens*. —— Omnia igitur quæ Deo *Patri* dantur in ſymbolo, ipſo uno *Filii* nomine, naturaliter tribuuntur & Filio.
Fulgent. Fragment. xxxvi. p. 652.

[b] *Patrem* cum audis, *Filii* intellige Patrem, qui Filius ſupradictæ ſit imago ſubſtantiæ. —— Hoc ergo ipſo nomine quo Deus ipſe *Pater* appellatur, cum Patre pariter ſubſiſtere etiam *Filius* demonſtratur. —— Eſt ergo Deus *Pater verus* tanquam veritatis Pater, non extrinſecus *creans*, ſed ex eo quod ipſe eſt, *Filium* generans, &c. *Ruffin. in Symbol.* p. 18. Ed. Ox.

[c] Cum *Patris* nomen auditur, nunquid natura *Filii* non continetur

full of the ſame Notion, aſſerting God to be a *Father*, and from that Principle inferring the *Coequality* and proper *Divinity* of Chriſt his Son. *Gregory Nyſſen*, in his firſt Oration againſt *Eunomius*, expreſſes the thing thus[a]: "He ſays, there is one only God Almighty: "If he means a *Father* under the Name of "*Almighty*, he ſays the ſame that we do, and "nothing different; but if he intends it of an "Almighty who is not a *Father*, he may "preach up *Circumciſion* if he pleaſes, along "with his other *Jewiſh* Tenets. The Faith "of *Chriſtians* looks to a *Father*. The Father "indeed is all; he is *moſt High*, *Almighty*, "*King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*: What-"ever Titles ſound high or great, they belong "to the *Father*; and all Things that are the "*Father*'s belong to the *Son*. Allow but this "and we admit the other." To the ſame CHAP. VI.

netur in nomine?——— neque enim *Filius* eſt cui alia ac diſſimilis erit a *Patre* ſubſtantia, *Hilar. de Trin.* p. 789. Eccleſiæ Fides ſolum verum Deum *Patrem* confeſſa, confitetur et Chriſtum.——— Per id enim Chriſtum confeſſa Deum verum eſt, quod ſolum verum Deum confeſſa ſit *Patrem*.——— Non enim unigenito Deo naturæ demutationem naturalis nativitas intulit; nec qui ex ſubſiſtente Deo ſecundum divinæ generationis naturam Deus ſubſiſtit, ab eo qui ſolus verus Deus eſt, ſeparabilis eſt veritate naturæ, p. 1006. Conf. 860, 938, 1163. Ed. Benedict.

[a] Εἷς γάρ ἐστι, φησὶ, καὶ μόνος θεὸς παντοκράτωρ. εἰ μὲν οὖν τὸν πατέρα διὰ τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος προσηγορίας ἐνδείκνυται, ἡμέτερον λέγει τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἄλλο τι ον· εἰ δὲ ἄλλον τινὰ παρὰ τὸν πατέρα τοῦ παντοκράτορα, καὶ τὴν περιτομὴν εἰ δοκεῖ κηρύσσειν, ὁ τῶν δογμάτων τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν προστάτης. τῶν γὰρ χριστιανῶν ἡ πίστις πρὸς τὸν πατέρα βλέπει. πάντα δέ ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ. ὕψιστος, παντοκράτωρ, βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων, κύριος τῶν κυριευόντων, καὶ πάντα ὅσα τῆς ὑψηλῆς ἔχεται σημασίας, τοῦ πατρός ἐστιν ἴδια· τὰ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐστι πάντα. ὥστε τούτου ὄντος, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐχόμενοι, κ. τ. λ. Gregor Nyſſen. Orat. 1. p. 15.

purpoſe

CHAP. VI. purpoſe ſpeaks *Athanaſius*, that the profeſſing our Belief in God, as a *Father*, is at the ſame time acknowledging the *Divinity* of the *Son* [a]. And the like is obſerved by *Cyril* of *Jeruſalem* in his Expoſition of the firſt Article of the Creed [b].

The Authors which I have cited, and to which more might be added [c], are all *Poſt-nicenes*, but they very well underſtood the true and genuine Principles of their Catholick Predeceſſors, and are ſo many preſumptive Evidences of the Doctrine of the *Ante-nicene* Church, when, tho' writing on different Occaſions, and in diſtant Places, they fall in ſo unanimouſly with the ſame way of thinking. Beſides, Teſtimonies may be cited from the *Ante-nicene* Writers themſelves, expreſſing the ſame Notion. *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*, who flouriſhed about the middle of the third Century, intimates the ſame thing thus: "The "*Father* being eternal, the *Son* muſt be eter- "nal too, Light of Light.— The Names by "me mentioned are undivided and inſepa- "rable: When I named the *Father*, before I "mentioned the *Son*, I ſignified the Son in "the *Father*.— If any of my falſe Accu-

[a] Ὁ δὲ τὸν θεὸν πατέρα λέγων, εὐθὺς ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ τὸν υἱὸν σημαίνει, καὶ ἐκ ἀγνοίας ὅτι υἱῆς ὄντος, διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ τὰ γινόμενα ἐκτίθη πάντα. Athanaſ. de Decret. Synod. Nic. p. 236. Benedict.

[b] Πατέρα τὸν θεὸν, ὀνομάσαμεν, ἵνα ἅμα τῷ τοῦν πατέρα, νοήσομεν καὶ τὸν υἱόν· υἱοῦ γὰρ καὶ πατρὸς ἀδιάιρετος ἐστι μετοχὴ τῶν ὄντων, *Cyril. Hieroſol.* Catech. vii. N. 3. cont. Catech. viii. N. 1.

[c] See others cited, and referred to in the *Critical Hiſtory of the Apoſtle's Creed*, p. 77, 78.

"ſers

" ſers ſuſpect, that becauſe I called God Cre- CHAP. VI.
" ator and Former of *all Things*, I made him
" Creator of Chriſt, let him conſider, that I
" before ſtiled him *Father*, and ſo the *Son* was
" included in *Him* [a], &c." Here we may obſerve, how this early and excellent Writer argues from the very Name and Relation of *Father*, that Chriſt could not be a *Creature*, in like manner as the *Poſt-nicene* Writers (before cited) argue from the ſame Title applied to the firſt Perſon in the Creed. So that if we interpret the Creed according to the ſtrict Senſe which the Antients had of the Term *Father*, that very Title indirectly aſſerts the *Divinity* of Chriſt, ſince God is thereby underſtood to be the *Father* of Chriſt [b], and not his *Creator*, as of Angels or Men.

But the ſame Thing will be more directly proved from the Title of *Son*, or *only Son* applied to the ſecond Perſon of the Trinity, in the Creed: For all the Fathers, both *Antenicene* and *Poſt-nicene*, conſtantly underſtood that Title as applied to Chriſt, to be expreſſive of his real and proper *Divinity*, of his

[a] Ὄντος ϗ αἰωνίᾳ τῷ πατρὸς, αἰώνιος ὁ υἱός ἐϛι, φῶς ἐκ φωτὸς ὤν. —— τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ λεχθέντων ὀνομάτων ἕκαϛον ἀχώριϛον ἐϛι ϗ ἀδιάϛατον τοῦ πληϛίον. πατέρα εἶπον, ϗ πρὶν ἐπαγάγω τὸν υἱὸν ἐϛήμαινα ϗ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ πατρί. —— εἰ δέ τις τῶν συκοφαντῶν ἐπιδέοι τῶν ἁπάντων ποιητὴν τὸν θεὸν ϗ δημιουργὸν εἶπον, οἶμαι μὲ ϗ τὸν χριϛοῦ λέγειν, ἀκηκόατε μὲ πρότερον πατέρα φήϛαντος αὐτὸν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς προσγέγραπται. *Dionyſ. Alex.* apud *Athenaſ. de Sententia Dionyſii*, p. 254, 257.

[b] Compare the Creed of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*, cited above, where the Term *Father* is interpreted in the ſame high Senſe, and as implying the real and eſſential *Divinity* of the Son.

CHAP. VI. partaking of the ſame Nature and Godhead with the *Father*, whoſe *only Son* he is. Biſhop *Bull*, in Reply to *Epiſcopius*, has largely inſiſted upon this Argument, proving that the Title of μονογενὴς, *only begotten*, or *only Son*, in the Creed, denotes the real and eternal Divinity of Chriſt. He proves it, 1. From ſuch Places of Scripture where that Title is applied to Chriſt. 2. From the ſtrict Force and Propriety of the Expreſſion it ſelf. 3. From the Order and Texture of the Creed. 4. From the univerſal and conſtant Interpretation of the Antients [c]. I may refer to Biſhop *Bull* and others that have come after him, for Proof that the Title of *Son of God*, or *only begotten Son*, in Scripture, cannot reaſonably be underſtood either of our Lord's *miraculous Conception* by the Holy Ghoſt, or of his *Meſſiaſhip*, or of his being the *firſt begotten* from the *Dead*, or of his receiving all Power, and his being *appointed Heir* of all Things: None of theſe Circumſtances ſingly conſidered, nor all together, will be ſufficient to account for the Title of *only Son*, or *only begotten*; but there is a Neceſſity of looking higher up to the pre-exiſtent and divine Nature of the *Word*, who was in the

[c] In Symbolo *Romano* Chriſtum dici Dei *Filium unicum*, ſive *unigenitum* (τὸν μονογενῆ) reſpectu divinæ ſuæ naturæ, qua non modo ante *Mariam*, ſed etiam ante omnia ſecula ex et cum Deo Patre extitit, probatu facile eſt: 1. Ex locis Scripturæ ubi vox μονογενὴς reperitur Chriſto tributa. 2. Ex vi et proprietate ipſius vocis. 3. Ex ordine et contextu verborum in Symbolo ipſo. 4. Denique ex conſtante ac perpetuo Catholicæ Eccleſiæ Senſu atque Interpretatione. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. v. p. 313.

Beginning *with God*, and was himſelf *very God*, before the Creation, and from all Eternity [d]. *Angels* and *Men* have been called *Sons of God*, in an improper and metaphorical Senſe; but they have never been ſtiled *only begotten*, nor indeed *Sons* in any ſuch emphatical and diſtinguiſhing manner as Chriſt is. They are Sons by *Adoption*, or faint Reſemblance: He is truly, properly, and eminently *Son of God*, and therefore *God*, as every Son of Man is therefore truly *Man* [e]. *Novatian* ſpeaks the Senſe of all the *Ante-nicene* Fathers in that Article: I forbear to produce their Teſtimonies here, having done it elſewhere [f]: There is not a more noted Principle or Maxim among the earlieſt Writers of the Church than this, that Chriſt is truly, properly, eſſentially God, becauſe he is properly *Son of God*. The Sum then is, that the *Apoſtles Creed*, in ſtiling Chriſt *only Son*, or *only begotten*, has expreſſed his *coeternal Divinity* in ſuch Terms as were conſtantly, and univerſally underſtood by the ancient Churches to carry that Idea with them. Therefore the very

CHAP. VI.

[d] See *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. v. p. 313. —— 320.
Dr. *Sherlock*'s Scripture Proofs of our Saviour's Divinity p. 161 —— 183.
Remarks on Dr. *Clarke*'s Expoſition of the Catechiſm p. 44. —— 48.

[e] Ut enim præſcripſit ipſa natura *Hominem* credendum eſſe, qui ex *Homine* ſit; ita eadem natura præſcribit et *Deum* credendum eſſe, qui ex *Deo* ſit: Ne ſi non et *Deus* fuerit cum ex *Deo* ſit, jam nec *homo* ſit licet ex *homine* fuerit, *Novat.* c. xi. p. 34. Edit. Welchm.

[f] Sermons, p. 329.

CHAP. VI. learned Biſhop *Stillingfleet* had good reaſon to ſay, "That although the *Apoſtles Creed* does "not in *expreſs* Words declare the Divinity of "the three Perſons in the Unity of the Divine "Eſſence; yet taking the Senſe of thoſe Ar-"ticles as the *Chriſtian Church* underſtood "them from the Apoſtles Times, then we "have as full and clear Evidence of this Doc-"trine, as we have that we received the Scrip-"tures from them [g]." The Reſult of what has been ſaid under the preſent Article, is, that whether we take the longer or the ſhorter *Creeds* of the antient Churches, whether thoſe that are moſt explicite or thoſe that are leaſt ſo, all of them contained the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, either as their *whole* ſubject Matter, or as their *principal* Part: And therefore ſo far as the *Creeds* of the antient Church can be of uſe to ſhow that any Point of Doctrine was judged *important*, or *fundamental*, we have full Proof that the Doctrine we are ſpeaking of, was looked upon as an *Eſſential* of Chriſtianity in the beſt and pureſt Ages.

It muſt indeed be owned, that it never was the Intention of *Creeds* to furniſh out any *compleat Catalogue* of Fundamentals [h], and ſo it would be very wrong to argue and infer *negatively*, that ſuch an Article was not in this or in that Creed, and therefore was not judged a

[g] *Stillingfleet* on the Trinity, Ch. ix. p. 229.

[h] See my *Sermons*, p. 321. —— 326.
Critical Hiſtory of the *Athanaſian* Creed, p. 285, &c. ſecond Edit.

Funda-

Fundamental by the Compilers (for by that Rule, neither the Article of God's being *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, nor that of *Life everlaſting* would be fundamental, having both been omitted in the old *Roman* Creed) but it may be right enough to argue and infer *poſitively*, that ſuch an Article was inſerted in the Creeds, and was therefore judged to be a *Fundamental*, or of great *Importance*; ſince none could be admitted to Chriſtian Baptiſm, in ſuch or ſuch Places, in the early Times, without an open and explicite Profeſſion of it. So much for the Head of *Creeds*. CHAP. VI.

II. Another way of knowing the Sentiments of the antient Church, in relation to the *Neceſſity* of believing the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, is to obſerve what *Cenſures* were paſſed upon the open Impugners of it. For, if it was accounted *Hereſy*, pernicious and deadly Hereſy, to oppoſe that Doctrine, in whole or in part, then it is plain, that the Doctrine was judged *important*, was looked upon as an *eſſential* of the Goſpel Faith. Among the Impugners of that Doctrine, in the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity*, have been commonly reckoned theſe ſeven. 1. *Cerinthus*, 2. *Ebion*, 3. *Theodotus*, 4. *Artemon*, 5. *Beryllus*, 6. *Paul* of *Samoſata*, 7. *Arius*. Of whom I ſhall treat in their Order, as briefly as may be conſiſtent with Perſpicuity.

A. D. 60. *Cerinthus.*

Cerinthus lived in the Apoſtolick Age, was an Impugner of our Lord's *Divinity*, and was condemned for it, probably, by St. *John* himſelf, and by the whole Church of that Time and after: Therefore the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity* was then looked upon as a *fundamental* Article. This is the Sum of what I maintain under this Head: I now come to the diſtinct Proof of the ſeveral Particulars.

1. That *Cerinthus* lived in the *Apoſtolick* Age, is a Fact ſo well atteſted by great Variety of antient Evidences, (ſome of which will come up preſently) that it ought to paſs for a certain and manifeſt Truth. Yet a late learned Foreigner [a], having a private Hypotheſis to ſerve, has called the Fact in queſtion, as ſome few others before him had alſo done [b]. His Reaſons have been conſidered, and anſwered by learned Hands [c]; to whom I refer the Reader, rather than enter into a needleſs Diſpute. *Irenæus*, is an Authority ſo early, and ſo expreſs for *Cerinthus*'s [d] flouriſhing in St. *John*'s Time, that it is alone ſufficient to remove all doubt of the Fact. Indeed *Epiphanius* [e] and *Philaſtrius* [f] place *Cerinthus* ſo

[a] *Frideric. Adolph. Lampe.* in Comment. in S. *Johan.* Proleg. l. ii. c. 3. p. 181, &c.

[b] Vid. *Buddeus* in Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 411.

[c] *Taylor*'s true Script. Doctrine, p. 263.
Buddeus Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 412.——419.

[d] *Irenæus*, l. iii. c. 3. 11.

[e] *Epiphan.* Hæreſ. xxviii. N. 2. p. 111.

[f] *Philaſtr.* Hæreſ. xxxvi. p. 80, Edit. Fabric.

high

high in the Apoſtolick Age, that they ſuppoſe him to have given great Diſturbance to St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, and to have occaſioned the calling of the firſt Council at *Jeruſalem*, A. D. 49. recorded in the *Acts* [g]. But there is reaſon to ſuſpect the Truth of that Report [h], and therefore I am content to place *Cerinthus* ſome Years lower, but early enough to have ſpread his Hereſies before St. *John* wrote his Epiſtles, and even before St. *Paul* wrote ſome of his. CHAP. VI.

2. *Cerinthus* held many Errors: But the only one I am concern'd to take notice of, is his denying the *Divinity* of Chriſt. That he did ſo, is plainly aſſerted by the antient Author of the *Appendix* to *Tertullian*'s Book of *Preſcription* [i]. But *Irenæus*, a more early, and a more accurate Writer, will give us the trueſt and moſt diſtinct account of what *Cerinthus* held with reſpect to the *Divinity* of our bleſſed Lord. The ſum of his Hereſy in that Point was, that *Jeſus*, and *Chriſt* were two Perſons: *Jeſus* a mere Man conceived in the natural way, of *Joſeph* and *Mary*; and *Chriſt* a celeſtial Spirit, which deſcended from above, and reſided in the Man *Jeſus*, not conſtantly, but occaſionally, from his Baptiſm to his Crucifixion [k]. Whatever View we take this Doc-

[g] Acts xv.

[h] *Vid.* Buddeus Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 113, 196.

[i] *Cerinthus* —— Chriſtum ex ſemine *Joſeph* natum proponit, hominem illum tantummodo ſine *Divinitate* contendens, *Tertul. de Præſcript.* c. lxviii. p. 221. Rigalt.

[k] *Cerinthus* autem quidam in *Aſia* —— *Jeſum* ſubjecit, non ex

CHAP. VI. trine of *Cerinthus* in, it is denying the proper *Divinity* of our bleſſed Lord. The Man *Jeſus*, upon his Principles, could not be *divine* at all, having no conſtant, or perſonal Union with what deſcended from above: And as to that *ſpiritual* Subſtance, called *Chriſt*, which was ſuppoſed, ſome Time, to reſide in him, even That was not properly *divine*, according to *Cerinthus*. The moſt that he ſaid of it was, that it was *ſpiritual*, and *impaſſible* becauſe ſpiritual: He does not ſay, becauſe *divine*. He ſeparates him from the *Principality* that is *over all*, that is to ſay, from *God ſupreme*, and therefore could not look upon him as properly *divine*. I may further obſerve, that his Doctrine of the *Logos*, or *Word*, was, that he was Son, not of *God ſupreme*, but of the *only begotten* [1], one remove ſtill farther off from *God* moſt high. And ſince he thus diſtinguiſhed him from the *only begotten*, who was alone ſuppoſed to *know* the Father immediately, it is plain he could not look upon The *Word* as ſtrictly *divine*. Add to

ex virgine natum (impoſſibile enim hoc ei viſum eſt) fuiſſe autem eum *Joſeph* et *Mariæ* Filium, ſimiliter ut reliqui omnes homines, et plus potuiſſe juſtitia et prudentia et ſapientia ab hominibus: et poſt Baptiſmum deſcendiſſe in eum, ab ea principalitate quæ eſt ſuper omnia, *Chriſtum* figura columbæ, et tunc annuntiaſſe incognitum Patrem, et virtutes perfeciſſe: in fine autem revolaſſe iterum *Chriſtum* de *Jeſu*, et *Jeſum* paſſum eſſe et reſurrexiſſe, *Chriſtum* autem impaſſibilem perſeveraſſe, exiſtentem ſpiritalem, *Iræn.* l. i. c. 26. p. 105. Bened. *Conf.* Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxviii. p. 110.

[1] Et initium quidem eſſe *Monogenem*, *Logon* autem verum Filium unigeniti, *Iræn.* l. iii. c. 11. p. 188.

this

this, that *Epiphanius* ſpeaking of ſome of the *Ebionites* (who were near allied to the *Cerinthians*, and borrowed much of their Doctrine from them) ſays, that they ſuppoſed their *Chriſt* to have deſcended from Heaven, being a *Spirit*, and firſt *created* of all, higher than the Angels, and bearing rule over all; which afterwards aſſumed a Body [m]. This Deſcription of *Chriſt* from above, ſeems to anſwer pretty nearly to *Cerinthus*'s Notion of a *ſpiritual Subſtance*, called *Chriſt*, ſo deſcending and reſiding in *Jeſus*; and is a Confirmation of what I am pleading for, *viz.* That *Cerinthus* did not look upon *Chriſt* as *divine* (in any Capacity) but as a *Creature* only. So then, whether we conſider *Cerinthus* as making *Jeſus* a mere Man, or as ſuppoſing the *Chriſt* (ſometimes reſiding in *Jeſus*) to be an inferior *Æon*, produced in Time, and the Offſpring of *Silence* [n], or, in ſhort, a *Creature*; either way he plainly impugned the true and proper *Divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt. CHAP. VI.

3. The next thing to be conſidered is, what kind of Reception ſuch his Doctrine met with in the Church of Chriſt. We have good reaſon to believe, that it was condemned as *Antichriſtian* Doctrine, by the Biſhops of *Aſia*, and

[m] Ἄλλοι δὲ ἐν ἀντιῦς λέγεσιν ἄνωθεν μὲν ὄντα, πρὸ πάντων δὲ κτισθέντα, πνεῦμα ὄντα, καὶ ὑπὲρ Ἀγγέλους ὄντα, πάντων τι κυριεύοντα, καὶ χριστὸν λέγεσθαι, τὸν ἐκεῖσε δὲ ἀεῖπα κεκληρῶσθαι. Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxx. c. 3. p. 127. Conf. *Vitringa* obſervat. Sacr. l. v. c. 12. S. 7. p. 146. Edit. ult.

[n] See Biſhop *Bull.* Def. F. N. Sect. iii. c. 1. p. 160, & Greg. Nazianz. orat. xxiii. p. 414.

by

CHAP. VI. by St. *John* himself. Indeed our Proofs of this matter are of the conjectural kind: But they are not without their Weight, if they amount to rational Presumptions, or strong Probabilities. If it can be probably argued from *external* Evidence, that St. *John* wrote his Gospel, or Epistles, in direct Opposition to the Tenets of *Cerinthus*, and if the *internal* Characters of his Writings themselves confirm the Report; then both these Circumstances concurring in the same thing, will together amount to as fair a Proof of what we pretend, as matters of this nature will generally admit of.

That St. *John* wrote his *Gospel* with a View to confute *Cerinthus*, among other false Teachers, is attested first by *Irenæus*[o], who was a Disciple of *Polycarp*, and who flourished within less than a Century of St. *John*'s Time. He is very particular in the Account, observ-

[o] Hanc Fidem annuncians *Joannes* Domini discipulus, volens per Evangelii annunciationem auferre eum qui a *Cerintho* inseminatus erat hominibus errorem, et multo prius ab his qui dicuntur *Nicolaitæ*, qui sunt vulsio ejus, quæ falso cognominatur scientia, ut confunderet eos, et suaderet, quoniam *unus Deus* qui omnia fecit per *Verbum* suum; et non, quemadmodum illi dicunt, alterum quidem Fabricatorem, alium autem Patrem Domini; et alium quidem Fabricatoris Filium, alterum vero de superioribus *Christum*, quem et impassibilem perseverasse, descendentem in *Jesum* Filium Fabricatoris, et iterum revolasse in suum Pleroma; et initium quidem esse *Monogenem*, *Logon* autem verum Filium *unigeniti*; et eam Conditionem, quæ est secundum nos, non a primo Deo factam, sed a *virtute* aliqua valde deorsum subjecta, & abscissa ab eorum communicatione, quæ sunt invisibilia et innominabilia: omnia igitur talia circumscribere volens discipulus Domini, et Regulam veritatis constituere in Ecclesia, ——— sic inchoavit in ea, quæ est secundum Evangelium, doctrina: *In principio erat Verbum*, &c. Iren. lib. iii. c. xi. p. 188.

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ing what ſpecial Errors of the ſame *Cerinthus* and others, the Apoſtle had an Eye to, in the penning of his Goſpel. CHAP. VI.

Our next Author to *Irenæus*, is *Victorinus Petavionenſis*, who flouriſhed about *A. D.* 290. He reports that the Biſhops of *Aſia*, being alarmed at the pernicious Doctrines then diſſeminated by *Valentinus*, *Cerinthus*, and *Ebion*, came in a Body to St. *John*, importuning him to bear his Teſtimony againſt them [p]. The Author, probably, miſtakes in bringing in *Valentinus* ſo early: But That will not invalidate his Report as to the other two, or as to the main Thing. Some Doubts have been raiſed about the Genuineneſs of that Treatiſe aſcribed to *Victorinus:* But Dr. *Grabe* ſeems to have well taken off the only material Exception to it [q]: To him therefore I refer the Reader.

Our next Author is *Jerome*, who twice tells the ſame Story, with ſome particular Circumſtances, not ſo plainly intimated elſewhere; once in his *Prologue* to his Commentaries on St. *Matthew* [r], and again in his Book of *Eccleſiaſtical*

[p] Cum eſſent *Valentinus*, et *Cerinthus*, et *Ebion*, et cæteri ſcholæ Satanæ diffuſi per orbem, convenerunt ad illum de finitimis provinciis omnes, et compulerunt ut ipſe Teſtimonium ſcriberet. *Victorin.* in Apocalypſ. Bibl. PP. Tom. i. p. 576. alias Tom. iii. p. 418.

[q] *Grabe* Spicileg. Vol. 2. p. 45.

[r] *Johannes* Apoſtolus et Evangeliſta ——— quum eſſet in *Aſia*, et jam tunc Hæreticorum ſemina pullularent *Cerinthi*, *Ebionis*, et cæterorum qui negant Chriſtum in carne veniſſe (quos et ipſe in epiſtola ſua *Antichriſtos* vocat, et Apoſtolus *Paulus* frequenter percutit) coactus eſt ab omnibus pene tunc *Aſiæ* Epiſcopis, et multarum

CHAP. VI. *eccleſiaſtical Writers* [s]. He does not ſay, in particular, from whence he had his Accounts: But he was a learned Man, converſant in Books, and he intimates that he had his Intelligence from Eccleſiaſtical Memoirs.

Epiphanius of the ſame Time, teſtifies more than once, that St. *John* wrote againſt *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, who had taught that Chriſt was a mere Man [t]. It is ſome Confirmation of this, what *Irenæus* relates of St. *John*'s meeting with *Cerinthus* at the Bath (as I have before noted) and running from him with Diſdain. It ſhews, at leaſt, that St. *John* and he were Contemporaries, and that the Apoſtle well underſtood his Principles, and deteſted them.

The main of the Account may receive ſome farther Confirmation from what *Julian*, the Apoſtate Emperor, was pleaſed to obſerve (thirty

tarum Eccleſiarum Legationibus, de *Divinitate* Salvatoris altius ſcribere, et ad ipſum, ut ita dicam, Dei *Verbum*, non tam audaci, quam felici temeritate prorumpere. Et Eccleſiaſtica narrat Hiſtoria, quum a Fratribus cogeretur ut ſcriberet, ita facturum ſe reſpondiſſe, ſi indicto jejunio in commune omnes Deum precarentur: quo expleto, Revelatione ſaturatus, in illud Proœmium cœlo veniens eructavit: *In principio erat Verbum*, &c. *Hieronym. Prolog. in Matt.* p. 3. opp. Tom. iv. Edit. Bened.

[s] *Joannes*, noviſſimus omnium ſcripſit Evangelium, rogatus ab *Aſiæ* Epiſcopis, adverſus *Cerinthum* alioſque Hæreticos, et maximè tunc *Ebionitarum* dogma conſurgens; qui aſſerunt Chriſtum ante *Mariam* non fuiſſe: Unde et compulſus eſt *divinam* ejus nativitatem edicere. *Hieronym. de viris illuſtrib.* c. ix. p. 54, 55. Fabric.

[t] Ἔνθα γὰρ τὸν χριστὸν ἐκ παρατριβῆς ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκήρυττεν ὁ Ἐβίων καὶ ὁ Κήρινθος, καὶ οἱ ἀμφ' αὐτοὺς, φημὶ δὲ ἐν τῇ Ασίᾳ, ἐκεῖ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀνέπεμψε τῷ κόσμῳ ταύτην τὴν ἁγίαν ἐκκλησίαν, ἵνα θάμνον τὴν ἀποδιώξασαν τὸν ὄφιν, καὶ λύσασαν τὴν τοῦ διαβόλου τυραννίδα. ἐκεῖ γὰρ ὁ ἅγιος Ἰωάννης. κ. τ. λ. *Epiphan.* Hæreſ. li. 2. p. 423. Conf. p. 424, 433, 434. *Hær.* lxix. p. 747.

Years or more before St. *Jerome*) that *John* perceiving how that the Perſuaſion of *Chriſt's* being *God*, prevailed mightily among the Chriſtians diſperſed thorough many Cities of *Greece* and *Italy*, did then take upon him to aſſert the ſame Doctrine in his Goſpel, with a View to humour Them, and to get himſelf Reputation [u]. Here then we have a plain Confeſſion from a vehement Adverſary, which Confeſſion of his (Ridicule and Banter apart) amounts to this; that the generality of Chriſtians, as early as the Apoſtolick Age, were exceedingly zealous for the Doctrine of Chriſt's *Divinity*, and that St. *John* himſelf commended them for it, incouraged them in it, and wrote his Goſpel to confirm it. *Julian*, very probably, had learned it from inconteſtable Monuments of Antiquity; and ſince he could not diſown the Fact, he endeavoured, in his ludicrous way, to turn the whole into Ridicule. He ſays nothing indeed of *Cerinthus* or *Ebion*, as he had no Occaſion: But yet this Story of his, as he has told it, falls in with the other Accounts in the main Thing; for which reaſon I have mentioned it. Such is the *external* Evidence we have to prove, that St. *John*, at the Requeſt of the Biſhops, and Churches of that Time, wrote his Goſpel to eſtabliſh the Faith of Chriſtians in CHAP. VI.

[u] Ὁ χρηστὸς Ἰωάννης, αἰσθόμενος ἤδη, πολὺ πλῆθος ἰαλικὸς ἐν πολλαῖς τῶν Ἑλληνίδων καὶ Ἰταλιωτίδων πόλεων ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς νόσου· ἀκμὴν δὲ, οἶμαι, καὶ τὰ μνημεῖα Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου, λάθρα μὲν, ἀκμὴν δὲ ὅμως αὐτὰ θεραπευόμενα, πρῶτος ἐτολμησεν εἰπεῖν [τὸν Ἰησοῦν θεὸν] Julian apud Cyril. l. x. p. 327. Edit. Lipſ.

our

CHAP. VI. our Lord's *Divinity*, againſt *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, or other falſe Teachers who oppoſed it [v].

The Truth of the Fact will be much confirmed from the *internal* Characters of St. *John*'s Writings: And this will fully appear by comparing his Expreſſions with *Cerinthus*'s Tenets, obſerving, all the way, how aptly they anſwer in that reſpect, directly confronting and overturning the Principles of that Hereſiarch and his Followers.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD. That is to ſay, at the *Creation* of all things (ἐν ἀρχῇ, as in *Geneſis*) The *Word* exiſted [x]; therefore he was before any Creature; not only before *Joſeph* and *Mary*, but even before any ſuch created *Æon* as *Cerinthus* had talked of, whether called the *Word*, or *Chriſt*.

AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD. Not a ſeparate *Æon*, inferior to God, and diſtant from God (like to what *Cerinthus* ſuppoſed of the *Demiurgus*, the Maker or Framer of the World [y]) not eſtranged from God, but united

[v] The very learned *Vitringa* has objected to this Account, as to ſome Circumſtances. *Obſerv. Sacr.* l. v. c. x. ſect. 7, 8. But he is well anſwered by *Buddeus*, Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 419, &c.

[x] Δυναται μὲν τοιγε τὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ὄνομα λαμβάνεσθαι καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀρχῆς, μανθανόντων ἡμῶν διὰ τῶν λεγομένων, ὅτι πρεσβύτερος ὁ λόγος τῶν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς γενομένων ἦν. *Origen.* Comment. in *Joan.* p. 50. Conf. *Buddeus* Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 430, 438. *Bull.* Judic. Eccl. c. ii. ſ. 4. p. 294.

[y] *Irenæus* l. iii. c. xi. p. 188. lib. i. c. xxvi. p. 105. Pſeudo-Tertullian. de Præſcript. Hæret. Append. p. 221. Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxviii. N. 1. p. 110.

to

to him, and abiding with him[z], while perſonally diſtinct from him. CHAP. VI.

AND THE WORD WAS GOD. Not a mere *Man*, as *Cerinthus* aſſerted of *Jeſus*, nor a *Creature*, as *Cerinthus* imagined of *Chriſt*, or of the *Word*, but *very God*[a].

THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. This is reſuming what had been ſaid before, after a kind of Break, to connect it the more cloſely with the Account of the Creation (which the Apoſtle was juſt going to mention) and to inculcate the more ſtrongly, againſt *Cerinthus*, that He *by whom all things were made* was no diſtant, inferior *Æon*, eſtranged from God, and unacquainted with him, but one that had been always *with* the ſupreme Father.

ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM. By the *Word*. Not by an inferior *Demiurgus*, nor by any ſeparate *Powers*, not by *Angels*, (as the *Cerinthians* taught[b]) not by any Creature-Cre-

[z] Καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν. ἀεὶ γὰρ ἐγένετο πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ ταυτὸν ῥῆμα, τὸ ἦν, τῷ λόγῳ καταμηχανῆται, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν, καὶ ὅτε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἦν, ὅτε τῆς ἀρχῆς χωριζόμενος, ὅτε τοῦ πατρὸς ἀπολειπόμενος. *Origen in Joan.* p. 44.

[a] Addit, *et Deus erat Verbum*; Illud, non minus quam ipſum Patrem, verum ſummumque Deum eſſe ſignificans. Atque iſtud quidem *Cerinthi* Commentis e diametro eſt oppoſitum, quippe qui per τὸν λόγον, ſive *Chriſtum*, equidem Subſtantiam quandam *Spiritalem* eamque humana natura præſtantiorem, neutiquam autem ὑπόστασιν quandam *divinam* quæ et ipſa *Deus* eſſet, intelligebat. *Buddei* Eccleſ. Apoſtolica. p. 438.

[b] Theodorit Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 3. l. v. c. 9. Auguſtin de Hæreſ. c. viii.

Epiphan. Hæreſ. 28. 1. *Philaſtr.* Hæn. 36. p. 77. *Pſeudo-Tertullian.* Præſcript. c. 68. *Damaſcen.* Hær. 28.

ator,

CHAP. VI. ator, but by the *Word* himſelf, very God, and one with God [c].

AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANY THING MADE THAT WAS MADE. Not the *lower* World only, but the *upper* World alſo; not the material and *viſible* World only, but the World of *Inviſibles*, the celeſtial Spirits, Angels and Archangels, They alſo were made by the ſame *Word*; for there was nothing made without him [d]. *By him were all Things created that are in Heaven and that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities or Powers: All Things were created by him, and for him* [e]. So writes St. *Paul*, the beſt Interpreter of what we have in St. *John*, as writing by the ſame Spirit, and with the ſame Views, and probably againſt the very ſame Men. Indeed, there is not in the whole New Teſtament any thing of a more ſublime and exalted Strain, concerning the perſonal Dignity of our Bleſſed

[c] *Omnia per illud* (Verbum) *facta ſunt.* Commentis *Cerinthianis* eſt oppoſitum: non enim a *Fabricatore* quodam mundi, a Deo primo diverſo, ſed a λόγῳ ὑποστατικῷ, qui et ipſe verus ſummuſque Deus ſit, mundum huncce et omnia quæ in eo ſunt, condita eſſe, verbis iſtis docet. *Buddei Eccleſ. Apoſtol.* p. 438. conf. *Vitring.* Obſerv. ſacr. l. v. c. 13. ſ. 4. p. 155.

[d] In eodem commate, contra eoſdem Hæreticos addit, *Et abſque eo factum eſt nihil.* Quæ verba, qui intentionem Apoſtoli non attenderit, nihil aliud quam inanem ταυτολογίαν continere ſuſpicetur. Sed nimirum Hæretici iſti (ut recte *Grotius*) alium volebant opificem eorum quæ cernimus, ſive mundi hujus *aſpectabilis*; alios rerum *inviſibilium*, et quæ ſuper hunc mundum ſunt, in ſuo quemque pleromate: Nihil igitur eorum quæ facta ſunt, ex operibus τοῦ λόγου excipit Joannes. *Bull. Judic. Eccleſ.* c. ii. p. 294.

[e] Coloſ. i. 16. See my Sermons. p. 58——62.

Lord,

Lord, than what we find in the *firſt* Chapter to the *Coloſſians*, from the 15th to the 19th Verſe incluſive; and in the *ſecond*, from Verſe the ſecond to the tenth. Thoſe Paſſages come the neareſt of any to St. *John*'s divine *Proeme*, and are only to be matched with it. It would be too great a Digreſſion here, to ſhow how thoſe ſo emphatical Expreſſions of St. *Paul* are all particularly fitted to confront the Tenets of *Cerinthus*, as if choſen for that very purpoſe, and directly pointed at them: But the learned Reader who is diſpoſed to examine into the Fact, may conſult a very judicious Foreigner, who has drawn that Matter out at length, expounding what St. *Paul* has ſaid in thoſe two Chapters, in a very clear and excellent manner, by the oppoſition which it carries in it all the way to the *Cerinthian* Hereſy [f]. I return to St. *John*.

CHAP. VI.

IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN. The ſame *Word* was *Life*, the λόγος and ζωὴ, Both one [g]. There was no Occaſion therefore for ſubtilly diſtinguiſhing the *Word* and *Life* into two *Æons*, as ſome did.

AND THE LIGHT SHINETH IN DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS COMETH NOT UPON IT. So I render the Verſe, conformable to the rendering of the ſame *Greek* Verb, καταλαμ-

[f] *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtolica. p. 468.——487.

[g] Hunc ipſum λόγον eſſe vitam hominis; otioſam innuens illorum ſubtilitatem, qui in Syſtemate divinarum emanationum, ζωὴν *vitam*, a λόγῳ diſtinguebant, eidemque ſubordinabant. *Vitringa* in *Prolog. Evangel. Johan.* Obſerv. Sacr. l. v. c. 13. p. 180.

CHAP. VI. *Cava*, by our Tranſlators, in another place of this ſame Goſpel [h]. The Apoſtle, as I conceive, in this fifth Verſe of his firſt Chapter, alludes to the prevailing Error of the *Gnoſtics*, and of all that ſort of Men [i]; who had adopted the antient *Magian* Notion of a *good God* and an *evil God*, the firſt called *Light*, and the other *Darkneſs*: which two they ſuppoſed to be under perpetual Struggles, and *obſtructed* by each other. In oppoſition, probably, to thoſe *Magian* Principles, St. *John* here aſſerts, that the *Word*, the true *Light*, was much ſuperior to any ſuch pretended rival Power. In him was no *Darkneſs* at all [k]: No ſuch oppoſite *Power* could come upon him, to obſtruct his Purpoſes, or defeat his good and great Deſigns.

HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD HAD BEEN MADE BY HIM, BUT THE WORLD KNEW HIM NOT. So I tranſlate, for greater Accuracy and Perſpicuity. HE CAME UNTO HIS OWN, AND HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT. Theſe two Verſes manifeſtly confront ſeveral of the *Gnoſtick* Principles, *viz.* that the World was made by an *inferior* and *evil* God, an Angel called *Demiurgus*; and that Chriſt came into another Perſon's Work, or Province, not

[h] John xii. 35. Vid *Boi.* exercitat. in Johan. p. 54, 55.

[i] Vid. *Vitringa* Obſervat. Sacr. l. v. c. 13. p. 136. *Epiphanius* ſpeaking of the *Gnoſticiſm* of thoſe Times, derives it in part from the Perplexity which thoſe Men were under, in the Queſtion about the *Origin* of *Evil*. *Epiphan.* Hæreſ. xxiv. 6.

[k] God is Light, and in him is no Darkneſs at all, 1 John i. 5.

into

into his *own*, when he manifeſted himſelf to the World[l]; and that he did not ſo manifeſt himſelf before his Incarnation. Thoſe ſeveral Errors ſeem to be directly pointed at, and confuted by what the Evangeliſt has taught in thoſe two Verſes [m]. But of the true Interpretation of thoſe two Verſes, I have treated more largely elſewhere [n]. CHAP. VI.

AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, became perſonally united with the Man *Jeſus*; AND DWELT AMONG US, reſided conſtantly in the human Nature ſo aſſumed. Very emphatical and pointed Expreſſions, ſearching to the Root of every Hereſy almoſt of that Time, ſo far as concerned the Perſon of Chriſt: For none of them would admit the *Word made Fleſh*, or *God made Man* [o]. Such Sentiments agreed not with their vain Philoſophy; they

[l] Scilicet *Cerinthi* et aliorum omnium Hæreticorum, qui mundi hujus conditorem a ſummo Deo ſeparabant, hæc fuit notiſſima ſententia, Chriſtum ſervatorem noſtrum a ſumma omnium *Principalitate* in hunc mundum veniſſe tanquam in *alienum opus*; idque ut homines a Dominio et Servitute Conditoris univerſi in neſcio quam libertatem (licentiam rectius dixeris) vindicaret. *Bull. Judic. Eccleſ.* c. ii. ſ. 4. p. 294. Conf. Iren. l. iii. c. 11. et l. v. c. 18.

[m] Docet itaque ſemper illum in mundo fuiſſe, et a primo rerum ortu, et Generis humani Inſtauratione, ſe in Eccleſia, quam in mundo habuit, manifeſtaſſe, et ut *Lucem veram* ſuos illuminaſſe; etiamſi a maxima mundi parte, et ab ipſis *Judæis* Carnalibus *agnitus non ſit*: Explodens erroneam illorum Hypotheſin qui Filium Dei ante ſuam ἐνσάρκωσιν ſe in mundo non *manifeſtaſſe*, neque illi *cognitum* fuiſſe, aſſerebant. *Vitringa. Obſerv. Sacr.* Vol. iii. p. 180.

[n] Sermons p. 49. ——— 52.

[o] Secundum autem nullam ſententiam Hæreticorum, *Verbum Dei caro factum eſt*. Iren. l. iii. c. 11. p. 189. Conf. *Bull.* Judic. Eccl. c. 2. ſ. 4. p. 194.

CHAP. VI. deem'd the thing to be *incredible* [a]. The *Cerinthians* admitted that a celeſtial Spirit deſcended occaſionally upon *Jeſus*; but they neither allowed that Spirit to be *perſonally* united with *Jeſus*, nor to be properly *divine*, as St. *John* teaches: So that in two Reſpects, thoſe Words of the Apoſtle confute their Principles [b].

AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER, *&c.* Words diametrically oppoſite to *Cerinthus*'s Hypotheſis [c], which made the *Logos* not the *only Begotten* of the Father, but a Remove farther off, *viz.* The *Son* of the only Begotten, as before obſerved.

AND OF HIS FULNESS HAVE ALL WE RECEIVED, AND GRACE FOR GRACE. The Expreſſion, *of his Fulneſs* [ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ] is very obſervable. The *Gnoſticks* in general, and the *Cerinthians* in particular, were wont to talk much of the πλήρωμα, or *Fulneſs*; by which they meant a fictitious Plenitude of the Deity, in which the whole Race of *Æons* was ſuppoſed to ſubſiſt, and

[a] Incredibile præſumpſerant Deum Carnem. *Tertul. contr. Marcion.* lib. iii. c. 8. p. 401. Conf. *Juſt. Mart.* Dial. p. 140, 204. Edit. Jebb.

[b] Dum dicit *Verbum caro factum, et habitavit inter nos*; ſignificat ipſum iſtum λόγον, qui *Filius Dei*, ſimulque *verus* ac *ſummus Deus*, erat, quemque tam multis deſcripſerat verbis, *carnem factum*, hoc eſt, humanam naturam, non ad certum tempus, ſed perpetuo, indiſſolubili, et inſeparabili nexu adſumſiſſe. *Budd. Eccl. Apoſt.* p. 440.

[c] Indicat eundem iſtum λόγον, qui caro factus erat, etiam eſſe *unigenitum Patris*: Adeoque diſcrimen illud quod *Cerinthiani* inter μονογενῆ ſive *Unigenitum*, et λόγον ſive *Verbum*, conſtituebant, explodit. *Buddeus* ibid. p. 440.

into

into which *ſpiritual* Men (ſuch as they eſteemed themſelves) ſhould hereafter be received. It was the Doctrine of the *Valentinians*, (and probably of the elder *Gnoſticks* alſo) that they were themſelves of the *ſpiritual* Seed, had *conſtant Grace*, and could not fail of being admitted into the *Plenitude* above[d]; while others were in their Eſteem *carnal*, had *Grace* but ſparingly, or occaſionally, and that not to bring them ſo high as the *Plenitude*, but to an intermediate Station only. But St. *John* here aſſerts,[e] that *all* Chriſtians equally and indifferently, all Believers at large, have received of the *Plenitude*, or Fulneſs of the divine *Logos*; and that not ſparingly, but in the largeſt Meaſure, *Grace upon Grace*, accumulated Grace[f]: Or rather, Grace following in conſtant Succeſſion, *Grace for Grace*; that is, new Succours coming on as quick as the former ſhould wear off or ceaſe, or *new* Supplies for the *old* ones paſt and gone[g], without Failure, or Intermiſſion. Our CHAP. VI.

[d] Iren. l. i. c. 6. p. 31.

[e] Docet denique ex hujus unigeniti et primogeniti Dei Filii πληρώματι (qua notione *Gnoſtici* uti conſueverunt) *omnes* accipere *Gratiam pro Gratia*, omnes omnis generis et ordinis in Chriſtum credentes, ejuſdem in hac vita participes eſſe *Gratiæ*, et ad ejuſdem *Gloriæ* ſpem vocatos eſſe: Neutiquam vero ita ſe rem habere ut *Gnoſtici* jactitabant, *ſolos* ſuæ Sectæ homines, et ſuæ imbutos Philoſophiæ myſteriis, ad ſummam illam Felicitatem primi *Pleromatis* Divinitatis adſpirare poſſe, reliquorum Credentium animabus inferioris et *medii* Generis Beatitudinis ſtatum deſtinatum eſſe. *Vitringa Obſ. Sacr.* l. v. c. xiii. p. 155, 156.

[f] See *Bull.* Harmon. Apoſtol. diſſert. ii. c. xi. p. 481.

[g] Vid. *Gataker.* Adverſar. Sacr. c. xxvii.
Anonymi Fortuita Sacra, p. 80, 81, &c.
Suicer. Theſaur. in χάρις, p. 1497.

preſent rendering, *Grace for Grace*, is literal, and juſt; provided only we underſtand it thus, that whenever one Grace ceaſes or expires, another comes in its place, and is given us *for* the former, or in lieu of the former.

I have now run through the *Proeme* of St. *John*'s Goſpel, endeavouring all the way to ſhow how aptly the Expreſſions ſuit with the Suppoſition which I here go upon, that it was penned with a particular View to the Hereſies of *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*; to ſay nothing of *Simon Magus*, or the *Gnoſticks* of thoſe Times: For tho' I have chiefly, or in a manner ſolely, made *Cerinthus*'s Hereſy the Subject of this Article, yet I would be underſtood to include any other Hereticks of the ſame time, or before him, ſo far as they fell in with the ſame common Errors.

Let us now paſs on to St. *John*'s firſt *Epiſtle*, in order to conſider whether That likewiſe may not be naturally interpreted the ſame way; ſo that one and the ſame Key may ſerve for Both.

Irenæus ſeems to ſay, that St. *John* pointed his Epiſtle [h] againſt the ſame. *Tertullian* alſo intimates, that St. *John* directed ſome parts of his *Epiſtle* againſt the *Ebionites* [i]. And St. *Je-*

[h] Igitur et omnes extra diſpoſitionem ſunt, qui, ſub obtentu Agnitionis, Alterum quidem *Jeſum* intelligunt, alterum autem *Chriſtum*, et alterum *Unigenitum*, &c.——— Quos Joannes in prædicta Epiſtola fugere eos præcepit, &c. ibid. p. 207.

[i] At in epiſtola eos maxime *Antichriſtos* vocat, qui Chriſtum negarent in carne veniſſe, et qui non putarent *Jeſum eſſe Filium Dei*. Illud *Marcion*, hoc *Hebion* vindicavit. *Tertull.* Præſcrip. c. 33. p. 214.

rome insinuates, that he pointed his Censure both against *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, marking them out as *Antichrists*, in his Epistle [k]. If we come to examine the *Epistle* it self, we shall easily perceive, that a great part of it was levelled, not so much against *Jews* or *Pagans*, as against *false Christians*, against the *Hereticks* of that Time, *Simonians* perhaps, or *Cerinthians*, or *Ebionites*, or *Nicolaitans*, or all of them, according as his Expressions here, or there, are particularly pointed. The two principal Errors which he there censures, were, the denial of Christ's being *come in the Flesh* [l], and the disowning that *Jesus* was *Christ* [m]. The *Docetæ*, (as they were afterwards called) the Followers of *Simon Magus*, denied *Christ's* real *Humanity*, making him a mere *Phantom*, *Shadow* or *Apparition*, a walking Ghost, as I observed above [n]. And the *Cerinthians* making a Distinction between *Jesus* and *Christ*, did not allow that Both were one Person. Against those chiefly St. *John* wrote his Epistle. He speaks of *Antichrists* newly risen up [o]; which could not be intended of *Jews* or *Pagans*, who had opposed the Gospel all along: And he speaks of Men that had been of the Church, but had apostatized from it; *they went out from us, but they were not of us* [p]. Let us now proceed to

[k] See the whole Passage cited above. p. 251.
[l] 1 John iv. 3. compare 2 John 7.
[m] 1 John ii. 22. [n] See above. p. 12, 150.
[o] 1 John ii. 18. 22. iv. 3. 2 John 7.
[p] 1 John ii. 19.

CHAP. VI. the Explication of thoſe Paſſages in St. *John*'s Epiſtle, which relate to our Purpoſe.

The Apoſtle obſerves, that THE WORD OF LIFE (or the *Word* in whom *was Life*, John i. 4.) WAS FROM THE BEGINNING[q]; conformable to what he ſays in the Entrance to his Goſpel, and in Oppoſition both to *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, who made *Jeſus* a mere *Man*, and who either denied any Pre-exiſting ſubſtantial *Logos*, or, at moſt, ſuppoſed him to ſtand foremoſt in the Rank of *Creatures*. The Apoſtle further ſtiles the ſame *Logos* ETERNAL LIFE[r], to intimate his *eternal* Exiſtence, in Oppoſition to the ſame Hereticks. He adds, WHICH WAS WITH THE FATHER, parallel to what he ſays in his Goſpel, *was with God*, and which has been explained above[s].

In the ſecond Chapter of the ſame Epiſtle, the Apoſtle deſcribes the *Antichriſtian* Hereticks of that Time as DENYING THAT JESUS IS CHRIST; which amounted to the ſame with DENYING THE FATHER AND THE SON[t]; becauſe WHOSOEVER DENIETH THE SON, THE SAME HATH NOT THE FATHER[u]. *Cerin-*

[q] 1 John i. 1. [r] 1 John i. 2. compare 1 John v. 20.
[s] See above, p. 254. *Conf.* Tertull. contr. Prax. c. xv. Bull. Judic. Eccleſ. c. ii. ſect. 5. p. 295. [t] 1 John ii. 22.
[u] 1 John ii. 23. Apoſtoli verba——commune *Cerinthi* et *Ebionis* dogma manifeſtè perſtringunt, nam illi ambo *Jeſum* eſſe *verum Dei Filium* ante *Mariam*, adeoque ante res omnes creatas ex Deo Patre natum omnino negabant, ac proinde, Apoſtolo judice, neque *Deum Patrem* re vera confeſſi ſunt: Siquidem a revelato Evangelio, nemo poteſt Deum *Patrem* rite colere aut credere, niſi qui Deum Filium ſimul amplectatur. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. ii. ſ. 5. p. 296.

thus denied that *Jeſus* was *Chriſt*, dividing *Chriſt* from *Jeſus*, as before explained: And he of conſequence denied *the Son*, becauſe he allowed not that *Jeſus* was perſonally united with the *Word*, the eternal *Son of God*, nor that That *Logos* which he ſpeaks of was the *only begotten* of the Father, being *Son* only of the only begotten, according to his Scheme: So that he totally diſowned the *divine* Sonſhip both of *Jeſus* and *Chriſt*, and by ſuch Denial denied both the *Father* and *Son*[v]. CHAP. VI.

The Apoſtle goes on to ſay, WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, GOD DWELLETH IN HIM, AND HE IN GOD[w]. Where again he manifeſtly ſtrikes at the *Cerinthian* and *Ebionite* Principles, which allowed not *Jeſus* to be *the Son of God*, in any true and proper Senſe, ſuch as St. *John* lays down in ſeveral places of his Writings, but particularly in the Entrance to his *Goſpel*[x], as explained above.

[v] Dum enim *Cerinthiani* negabant *Jeſum* eſſe *Chriſtum*, per veram ſcilicet perpetuamque unionem; *Chriſtum* inſuper Filium Dei verum et *unigenitum* inficiebantur; perinde hoc erat ac ſi et *Patrem* et *Filium* negaſſent, cum, ut recte *Joannes* dicit, *Qui Filium negat, nec Patrem habeat*— Eo ipſo enim, dum negabant *Jeſum eſſe Chriſtum*, nec ipſum quoque *Chriſtum* pro *Dei Filio* agnoſcebant, non poterant non multo magis negare, *Jeſum* eſſe *Filium* Dei, *Buddei. Eccleſ. Apoſtol.* p. 445.

[w] 1 John iv. 15. compare iii. 23.

[x] Non eſt dubitandum quin Apoſtolus his verbis confeſſionem exigat illius *Filii Dei* quem ipſe ex parte ſupra in hac Epiſtola prædicaverat, et plenius in Evangelio ſuo declarat: nempe Filii Dei, qui ſit Dei Patris λόγος, qui *in principio* erat, et *apud Deum* erat, et *Deus ipſe erat*, per quem *omnia facta ſunt*, &c. —— Hujuſmodi vero Dei Filium *Jeſum* noſtrum eſſe, non confeſſus eſt *Cerinthus*, neque poſt ipſum *Ebion. Bull. Judic.* c. ii. ſ. 9. p. 297.

In

CHAP. VI.

In the Chapter next following, the Apoſtle repeats the ſame Thing as before, or uſes Words to the ſame Effect: WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, IS BORN OF GOD[a]: And ſoon after adds, WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD[b]? Here lay the main Streſs, to believe that *Jeſus*, who was truly and really Man, was as truly and really the eternal *Son of God*[c]. The Apoſtle, in the next Verſe, ſeems to point at the *Docetæ*, as he had before done in the ſame Epiſtle[d], being equally concerned to maintain, that Chriſt had real *Fleſh*, as that he had real *Divinity*; that ſo the Faith of the Goſpel might ſtand upon this firm Foundation, that the eternal Son of God became Son of Man for the Salvation of Mankind. Hereupon therefore the Apoſtle, in Defence of Chriſt's real *Humanity*, ſays, THIS IS HE THAT CAME BY WATER AND BLOOD[e]. What he elſewhere expreſſes, by his *coming in the Fleſh*[f], here he expreſſes more emphatically, by his *coming* in, or by, *Water* and *Blood*; alluding to what Chriſt ſhed at his *Paſſion*, as a Proof

[a] 1 John v. 1. [b] 1 John v. 5.

[c] Quia præ aliis maximè tunc creſceret *Cerinthi* Hæreſis, ideo Apoſtolus Fidem illam qua creditur *Jeſum* eſſe *Dei Filium*, paſſim in hac Epiſtola commendat, urget, inculcat. *Bull.* ibid. p. 297.

[d] 1 John iv. 2, 3. compare 2 John 7. and ſee *Bull.* Judic. p. 296. *Buddei* Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 550, &c.

[e] 1 John v. 6.

[f] 1 John i. 1, 2. iv. 2, 3. 2 John 7. compare 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 18. iv. 1.

that

that he had then a real Body, and was really *Man*, not a Spectre, Phantom, or Apparition, as ſome Hereticks pretended. It is to be noted, that the antient *Viſionaries*, (who were the *Simonians*, *Menandrians*, *Saturnilians*, and *Baſilidians*) being aſhamed perhaps to confeſs Chriſt crucified [g], contrived any wild Suppoſition imaginable to evade it. *Baſilides* pretended, that Chriſt himſelf did not ſuffer, but that *Simon* of *Cyrene* was crucified in his room [h]. The elder *Docetæ* had not ſo happy a Talent at inventing, but were content to ſay, that Chriſt had no *real* Body, and ſuffered in *Appearance* only, impoſing upon the Eyes of the Spectators. In Oppoſition probably to that kind of Men (of which there might be many in the Apoſtolick Age) the Apoſtle here emphatically obſerves, that Chriſt came by *Water* and *Blood*: For his ſhedding both *Water* and *Blood* out of his Side, at his Paſſion, was a Demonſtration, that there was a *real* Body then hanging upon the Croſs, not a *Phantom*, or a *ſpiritual* Subſtance. Which very Argument is well urged by *Irenæus* [i], and CHAP. VI.

[g] Hence it is that *Polycarp* joins both together in the ſame Reproof: πᾶς γὰρ, ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ Ἰησοῦν χριςὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι, Ἀντίχριςός ἐςι· καὶ ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ σταυροῦ, ἐκ τοῦ Διαβόλου ἐςί. Polycarp Epiſt. c. vii.

[h] Irenæus lib. i. c. xxiv. alias xxii. p. 101.
Epiphan. xxiv. 3.
Philaſtr. c. xxxii. p. 68.
Auguſtin de Hæreſ. N. iv.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. i. c. 4.

[i] Quomodo autem, cum *caro* non eſſet, ſed *pareret* (i. e. *apparet*) quaſi homo, crucifixus eſt, et a latere ejus puncto *ſanguis* exiit et *aqua*? *Iren.* lib. iv. c. 33. (alias 57.) p. 271.

Novatian

CHAP. VI. *Novatian*[k], in proof of the ſame Thing, againſt the *Docetæ*. As St. *John* is the only Evangeliſt who has related that Circumſtance of the Paſſion[l], ſo it is obſervable, how particular a Streſs he lays upon it; immediately ſubjoining, in Confirmation of it, AND HE THAT SAW IT (meaning himſelf perhaps, or elſe the *Soldier* that pierced our Lord[m]) *bare Record*, AND HIS RECORD IS TRUE, *&c.* And he confirms it farther from two *Propheſies* out of the Old Teſtament. Wherefore it is the more probable that in his *Epiſtle* before, he alluded to That Circumſtance, and in Proof of Chriſt's *Humanity*. But St. *John* ſtrengthens the Argument further, by ſuperadding the Conſideration of the Teſtimony of the *Spirit*. AND THERE IS THE SPIRIT ALSO BEARING WITNESS, BECAUSE THE SPIRIT IS TRUTH[n] *it ſelf*, is eſſential Truth. The Spirit reſiding in the Church, and working in Believers by ſupernatural Graces, bears Teſtimony to the Doctrine taught by the Apoſtles, and believed by the Church; particularly to the Doctrine here ſpoken of, *viz.* that Chriſt the *Son of God*, became *Son of Man* for the Salvation of Mankind.

The Apoſtle, having ſaid that the *Spirit is Truth*, or eſſential Truth, (which was giving

[k] Sanguis idcirco de Manibus ac Pedibus, atque ipſo latere demanavit, ut noſtri conſors corporis probaretur, dum occaſûs noſtri legibus moritur. *Novat.* c. x. p. 31. *Edit Welchm.*

[l] John xix. 34. [m] See *Dodwell*, diſſert. in Iren. 1. p 39.

[n] 1 John v. 6.

him

him a Title, common to *God the Father*, and to *Chriſt*) in order to obviate any Miſapprehenſion, or Offence, accounts for what he had ſaid, and reconciles it, by declaring preſently, that the *Father*, and the *Word*, and the *Spirit* are all *One*, are equally *Truth* it ſelf: FOR THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR RECORD IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE [o]. Therefore it was as right to ſay, that *the Spirit is Truth*, as it might be to ſay it either of *Father* or *Son*, ſince they are all *One*. That Point being cleared, the Apoſtle then returns [p] to ſpeak of the *Spirit*, the *Water*, and the *Blood*, as teſtifying the ſame Thing to Mankind, which is teſtified above to the Angels in Heaven. And the *Spirit* is now particularly mentioned as bearing witneſs in Earth (rather than the *Father* or the *Son*) becauſe, ſince the Time of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, the Church has been under the ſpecial *Oeconomy* of the Holy Spirit, who was to *guide* the Apoſtles, and the Churches after them, *into all Truth* [q].

CHAP. VI.

I know it has been objected, that this way of reckoning the *Spirit* twice, is reducing the *ſix* Witneſſes to *five*. Now, indeed, if the Text had called them *ſix* Witneſſes, there would have been ſome Force in the Objection: But as it is mere Fancy and Preſumption, to make them *ſix*, we may take the Liberty to think, that the *fifth* twice told will fully anſwer all that the Text mentions.

[o] 1 John v. 7. [p] 1 John v. 8. [q] John xvi. 13.

The

CHAP. VI. The Apoſtle having ſaid thus much of the Teſtimony of the *Spirit*, who is one with the *Father*, comes next to make the proper Application of it, inforcing it ſtill farther, by directly calling it the *Teſtimony of God*: IF WE RECEIVE THE WITNESS OF MEN, THE WITNESS OF GOD IS GREATER; FOR THIS IS THE WITNESS OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH TESTIFIED OF HIS SON [e].—— THAT GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON [f]. This is the Burden of the whole *Epiſtle*, the Sum and Subſtance of what the Apoſtle aims at quite through [t], that God had been pleaſed to reconcile the World unto himſelf by the Mediation of his own *divine* Son *made Man*. This was what the *Water* and the *Blood* teſtified in part, and what the *Spirit* of God, one with God, more abundantly teſtifies in the whole [u].

I was willing thus occaſionally to explain that celebrated Paſſage, concerning the *three Witneſſes*, which has been the Subject of long and warm Debates, both as to the Genuineneſs of

[e] 1 John v. 9. [f] 1 John v. 11.

[t] Hæc eſt ſumma: omnem doctorem qui confeſſus fuerit *unum Jeſum Chriſtum, verum Dei Filium*, propter hominum ſalutem *vere hominem factum*, ex Deo eſſe (nimirum ea parte, qua id confitetur et docet, ut recte *Eſtius*) contra pro *Pſeudo Propheta* atque *Antichriſto* habendum eſſe, quiſquis hoc confeſſus non fuerit. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. ii. ſ. 9. p. 297.

[u] Immo quæ deinceps, *ver.* 6, 7, 8. de *tribus Teſtibus*, in cælo pariter ac in terra, docet, huc præcipue comparata eſſe videntur, ut oſtendat *Jeſum eſſe Filium Dei*, quod *Cerinthiani*, ut diximus, negabant. Hinc concludit: Si hominum *Teſtimonium admittimus, Dei Teſtimonium majus eſt*. Quodnam eſt hoc Dei Teſtimonium? Reſpondet: *Atque hoc eſt, quod Deus de Filio ſuo Teſtimonium dixit*. Buddeus. Eccl. Apoſtol. p. 446.

the

the Text, and the Connexion of it with the reſt, upon which hangs the true Interpretation. The Expoſition which I have given, appears to me juſt and natural, ſuppoſing the Text to be genuine: And I conceive, that the Genuineneſs thereof has been ſufficiently maintained by a great many able Hands [w]; and particularly by a late learned and accurate Writer [x], to whoſe uſeful Labours I refer the Reader for Satisfaction, and now I return. CHAP. VI.

The Apoſtle, in the Cloſe, remarkably ſums up all, in theſe ſtrong and choſen Words: WE KNOW THAT THE SON OF GOD IS COME, AND HATH GIVEN US AN UNDERSTANDING, THAT WE MAY KNOW HIM THAT IS TRUE: AND WE ARE IN HIM THAT IS TRUE, EVEN IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD, AND ETERNAL LIFE [y]. I need not here ſtand to prove, that the Title of *true God*, in this Text, is to be underſtood of Chriſt, becauſe I have done it elſewhere [z]: But I would obſerve farther, how aptly every Word is choſen to obviate the erroneous Tenets of *Cerinthus*, and of other the like falſe Teachers of thoſe Times. *The Son of God:* Not the Son of *Joſeph* and *Mary*, nor the Son of the *only Begotten*, but the immediate *Son of God*; related

[w] See moſt of them numbered up in *Taylor's true Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 32.

[x] Mr. *Jewell's* critical Examination of the new Text and Verſion of the New Teſtament. Part. ii. p. 123——154.

[y] 1 John v. 20.

[z] Sermons, p. 206.——214.
Compare *Taylor's* true Scripture Doctrine, p. 282, &c.
Dr. *Biſhop's* eight Sermons, p. 56, &c.

to

CHAP. VI. to God as a *Son* to a *Father*, not as a *Creature* to his Lord and Maker. He *is come*, come in the Fleſh, and not merely to reſide for a Time, or occaſionally, and to fly off again, but to abide and dwell with Man, clothed with Humanity. We are *in him that is true*, in the true Father, by *his Son* Jeſus Chriſt: Who is the *true God*; not an inferior *Power* or *Angel*, (ſuch as *Cerinthus* ſuppoſed the *Demiurgus* to be) not a created *Æon*, the Offspring of the *Monogenes*, or of *Silence*, as *Cerinthus* fondly imagined the *Logos* to be; but *true God*, one with the Father. *And eternal Life*, the ſame that had been with the Father from the Beginning, before any thing was created, conſequently from all Eternity.

I have now gone through both the *Epiſtle* and *Goſpel* of St. *John*, pointing out the moſt obſervable Paſſages in Both, which concerned the preſent Queſtion. The Sum of what I have advanced under this Article, is, That St. *John* moſt apparently levelled a great part of his firſt Epiſtle againſt the *Cerinthian* Doctrines; and that it may be ſtrongly argued, from Evidences *external* and *internal*, that he wrote the *Proeme* to his Goſpel with the ſame, or the like Views. It appears further, that in his *Epiſtle* particularly, he has aſſerted the *neceſſity* of believing our Lord's *divine* Sonſhip, his proper *Divinity*, under pain of being excluded Heaven and Happineſs: *Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father.* Whoſoever denies Chriſt to be Son of God (in St. *John*'s Senſe

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Senſe of *Son*, a Son that was *always* with God, and is *God*) is a *Liar* and *Antichriſt*, denying both *the Father and the Son* [a]. The Concluſion therefore from all is, that the denying our bleſſed Lord's real *Divinity*, is *Hereſy* and *Antichriſtianiſm*, much to be abhorred by every Diſciple of Chriſt, according to the infallible Deciſion of an inſpired Apoſtle [b]. Many were the Evaſions and Subterfuges of ſelf-opiniated Men, who thought it a thing *incredible* that the *divine Word* ſhould put on *Fleſh*, or *God* become *Man*, and who choſe rather to paſs Cenſure upon the *Wiſdom* of *Heaven*, than ſuſpect their *own*: But ſober and modeſt Men reſigned up their *Faith* to *divine* Revelation, as was their bounden Duty to do; and among the foremoſt of thoſe was our bleſſed Apoſtle. So now, beſides the *Reaſon* of *Things*, taking in what the Scriptures have declared of the *Truth* of our Doctrine, and beſides the true and natural Import of the Form of *Baptiſm* (urged above) we have moreover the Determination of St. *John* himſelf, for the *Impor-*

[a] 1 John ii. 22, 23.

[b] Hæc autem ideo fuſius proſecutus ſum, quod hinc non modo ex antiquiſſimorum Patrum monumentis, ſed etiam ex *ſcriptis Apoſtolicis*, omnibus liqueat, fuiſſe in ipſo *Apoſtolorum* ævo, qui Chriſti Domini noſtri *Divinitatem* negarunt, quique eo nomine pro *Hæreticis*, adeoque pro *Antichriſtis* (tantum aberat ut *Fratres* et *vera Eccleſiæ membra* cenſerentur) ab *Apoſtolis* habiti fuerint. Præterea, hinc quoque clare elucet, doctrinam de Filii Dei ὑποστάσει, ſive de Chriſto θεανθρώπῳ, *vero Deo* et *vero Homine*, ut a naſcente Evangelio variè a variis Hæreticis impugnata fuit, ita ab Eccleſiæ veris Paſtoribus, modis omnibus omnique ſtudio, tanquam *Fidei Chriſtianæ Caput et Fundamentum ipſum*, religioſiſſime ſemper conſervatam et cuſtoditam fuiſſe. *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* p. 298.

tance of the Doctrine of our Lord's *Divinity*, and of Conſequence, for the Doctrine of a coequal and coeternal Trinity.

But ſuppoſing it might be reaſonably doubted (tho' I ſee not how it can) whether we have rightly interpreted St. *John* as to the main thing, or whether *Cerinthus* and others of like Principles, were directly ſtruck at by him; yet ſtill we may be able to maintain our Point another way, by ſhowing at leaſt that the antient Churches, next ſucceeding the Apoſtles, and the Churches after, did condemn *Cerinthus* and *Ebion*, and all others who denied our Lord's *real* and proper *Divinity*. And I may here obſerve, before I go farther, that if what I have offered about St. *John*'s condemning the Doctrine of *Cerinthus*, be juſt, it may be conſidered as looking *forwards*, and condemning the Principles of the *Ebionites* alſo, whom I am next to mention: And ſo on the other hand, what I ſhall have to ſay of the *Ebionites*, and their being condemned by the Church, may be underſtood to look *backwards*, equally affecting the *Cerinthians* ſo far as they agreed in the ſame common Sentiments. Indeed, Biſhop *Bull* had conſidered Both together, and in a *ſcriptural* View, as I have hitherto conſidered *Cerinthus* ſingly: But I apprehended that if one were taken in a *ſcriptural*, and the other in an *eccleſiaſtical* View, the two parts would reflect Light and Strength one upon another, and the whole would be both more *diſtinct*, and more *com-*

pleat. I proceed then to conſider the *Ebionites*, as cenſured by the *Church*, in the *ſecond* and *third* Centuries, for denying our Lord's *Divinity*; tho', if what I have before advanced be true, they were fully condemned before for the ſame, even within the *Apoſtolick Age*, as well as the *Cerinthians*. CHAP. VI.

A. D. 72. *Ebion.*

From *Cerinthus* the Maſter, I paſs on to *Ebion*, his *Diſciple* and Succeſſor [a]; ſo called, I ſuppoſe, becauſe of his being *Cerinthus*'s Admirer and Follower, in ſome Things. They ſeem to have been Contemporaries, Both of the *Apoſtolick* Age, tho' *Ebion*, perhaps, the younger or later of the Two. I follow *Epiphanius* chiefly, in placing *Ebion* as I do [b], a little after the Time of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. But if he flouriſhed ten, or twenty Years later, or began to ſpread his Hereſy but a little before St. *John* wrote his Goſpel, (that is, before A. D. 97.) as *Jerome* ſeems to have thought; that will make no Difference with reſpect to the main thing which I am upon.

Neither is it very material, whether there ever was ſuch a Perſon as *Ebion*, Founder of

[a] Hujus ſucceſſor *Hebion* fuit, *Cerintho* non in omni parte conſentiens. *Pſeudo-Tertullian Præſcript.* c. 48. p. 221.

Hebion diſcipulus *Cerinthi*, in multis ei ſimiliter errans, *&c.* Philaſtr. Hæreſ. xxxvii. p. 81.

Cerinthum, et hujus ſucceſſorem *Ebionem*. Hieronym. *Dial. contr. Lucifer.* p. 304.

[b] *Epiphan.* Hær. xxx. 2.

CHAP. VI. the Sect, or whether the *Ebionites* took their Name from their mean Condition, or from their poor and abject Notions, rather than from any Leader called *Ebion*. But as the *Antients* in general do aſſert there was ſuch a Man [c], tho' ſome few of them may ſeem to contradict it, I cannot but eſteem their Teſtimonies as much more weighty than the Conjectures of ſome learned *Moderns* [d], tho' ſpecious, to the contrary: Beſides that other as learned and judicious Moderns [e] have well defended the *antient* Perſuaſion, and have ſufficiently replied to the common Exceptions made to it. Wherefore, there remains very little room for Doubt or Scruple, as to the Truth of the Fact, that there was formerly ſuch a Perſon as *Ebion*, Founder of the Sect of the *Ebionites*.

[c] *Tertullian* Præſcript. Cap. x, xxxiii. de carn. Chriſti, c. xiv, xviii. Virg. Veland. c. vi.
Victorinus Petavion. in Apocalypſ.
Alexand. Alexandr. Epiſt. Synod. apud Theodorit. E. H. l. i. c. iv. p. 15.
Hilarius p. 779, 789, 799, 916, 919. Edit. Bened.
Ruffin. in Symbol. p. 27.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fabul. p. 188, 218.
Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxx. 2. et paſſim.
Philaſtr. Hær. xxxvii. p. 81.
Hieron. contr. *Lucifer.* p. 304. et in *Iſai.* i. 3. p. 10. adv. Helvid. p. 141. et alibi.
Auguſtin. Epiſt. ad Hieronym. lxxii. p. 195. Ed. Bened.

[d] See the moſt of them numbred up in *Ittigius de Hæreſ.* primi ſæcul. p. 303. *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 492.

[e] *Bull.* Judic Eccleſ. c. ii ſ. 17. p. 303.
Fabricius in not. ad Philaſtr. p. 81, &c.
Moſheim. Obſerv. Sacr. l. i. c. 5. Et in Vindic. cont. Toland. c. vii.
Buddeus Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 491, &c.
Berriman, Serm. p. 48.

The

The *Ebionites*, as all allow, denied any proper *Divinity* of Chriſt. Some of them indeed admitted that he was born of a *Virgin* [f]; but moſt of them, the elder *Ebionites* eſpecially, denied even That [g], and none of them confeſſed his true Godhead. I ſhall not here ſtand to enumerate or clear their Sentiments, becauſe they are well known; beſides that they will appear diſtinctly in the Sequel, as I run through the *Ante-nicene* Writers in order, who have condemned the *Ebionites* by Name, or at leaſt have condemned their Principles, as amounting to *Hereſy*. CHAP. VI.

A. D. 107. I ſhall begin with *Ignatius*, an eminent Perſonage, a Diſciple of St. *John*, and by him ordained Biſhop of *Antioch*, and who afterwards died a Martyr, either in 116, or 107. Accounts differ as to the Time: I chuſe, with the learned *Moſheim* [h], to take the earlier Date, according to the *Acts* of his Martyrdom, being as probable as the other. *Ignatius* does not mention the *Ebionites* by Name; but he plainly enough condemns their Principles, in more Places than one.

In his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, he commends their Unity of *Faith* and *Doctrine*, in

[f] Vid. *Origen.* contr. Celſ. lib. v. p. 272.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 1. p. 219.

[g] Vid. *Irenæus*, l. iii. c. 21. p. 215. l. v. c. 1. p. 292.
Tertullian de carn. Chriſti. c. xiv. p. 319.
Euſebius Eccl. H. l. iii. c. 27.
Epiphan. Hær. xxx. p. 125.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 1. p. 218.
Philaſtr. Hæreſ. xxxvii. p. 82.

[h] *Moſheim.* Vindiciæ antiquæ contr. Toland. c. viii. p. 230.

as much as they walked according to *Truth*, and no *Hereſy* dwelt with them[i]. Then he proceeds to ſpeak of *Hereticks*, as follows; "Some are wont to bear about them the "Name [of Chriſt] in wicked Craftineſs, "while they commit Things unworthy of "God; whom it behoves you to avoid as you "would wild Beaſts. For they are a kind of "fell Dogs that will bite you unawares: you "ſhould be upon your Guard againſt them, "as they are next to *incurable*. There is one "*Phyſician* fleſhly and ſpiritual, *made* and *not "made*, God incarnate, in Mortality true Life, "both of *Mary* and of *God*, firſt paſſible and "then impaſſible, [Jeſus Chriſt our Lord] "let no one therefore deceive you; as hither-"to you are not deceived, but are wholly "of God[k].

Theſe Words of *Ignatius*, in their general View, ſtrike at all the Hereſies of that Time, which any way tended to undermine the Doctrine of *God incarnate*, whether by impugning Chriſt's *Humanity*, or *Divinity*: And as the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians* were among thoſe that impugned our Lord's *Divinity*, the Cenſure here given, muſt of courſe affect them.

[i] Ignat. Epiſt. ad Epheſ. c. vi.

[k] Εἰώθασι γάρ τινες δόλῳ πονηρῷ τὸ ὄνομα περιφέρειν, ἀλλά τινα πράσσοντες ἀνάξια θεοῦ. οὓς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ὡς θῆρα ἐκκλίνειν· εἰσὶ γὰρ κύνες λυσσῶντες, λαθροδάκνται· οὓς δεῖ ὑμᾶς φυλάσσεσθαι ὄντας δυσθεραπεύτους. εἷς ἰατρός ἐστι, σαρκικός τε καὶ πνευματικός, γενητὸς καὶ ἀγένητος, ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος θεός, ἐν θανάτῳ ζωὴ ἀληθινή, καὶ ἐκ Μαρίας καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ, πρῶτον παθητὸς καὶ τότε ἀπαθής. μὴ οὖν τις ὑμᾶς ἐξαπατάτω ὥσπερ δὲ ἐξαπατᾶσθε, ἄλλ' ὄντες θεῷ. *Ignat. ad Epheſ.* vii, viii.

Some

Some of the Expreſſions ſeem to be particularly pointed at them. *Made and not made:* The Words *not made*, directly confront both thoſe Hereſies [l]. So alſo, the Words *God incarnate*, God coming in the Fleſh. Then again, *of Mary and of God:* Thoſe Hereticks would have ſaid, of *Mary* and of *Joſeph*; none of them would Then have ſaid, *of God.* Let the Reader obſerve, that *Ignatius* here plainly excludes all ſuch Hereticks from Salvation, ſince they had rejected the only *Phyſician* that could *heal* them, Chriſt *God-Man*, by denying the Union of *God* and *Man* in him [m]. The Principles which this truly primitive and Apoſtolical Writer goes upon, are, 1. That the *ſalutary* Doctrine of Redemption is, that the Reconciliation of God and Man is wrought by a Mediator who is both *God* and *Man.* 2. That denying and oppoſing that Doctrine, is, in effect, renouncing all Claim to the Benefit of it, ſince it is reaſonable to think, that when God reveals his good and gracious Deſigns towards Mankind, they who will not give Credit to them, ſhall have no part in them.

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[l] See my *ſecond Defence*, 254, alias 259. *Bull.* Def. F. N. Sect. ii. c. 2. p. 39. *Judic. Eccl.* Cap. i. N. 1. p. 286.

[m] Nulla eſt hominibus ſalus, niſi per *unicum* Animarum *medicum*, Chriſtum *Deum* et *Hominem*, Deum inter Homineſque *Mediatorem*. At iſti hujuſmodi Medicum et Mediatorem nullum agnoſcunt, nullum volunt: Itaque plane deplorata eſt ipſorum ſalus, niſi ſcilicet ab Hæreſi ſua tandem ſerio reſipiſcant, ac Deum Filium pro ſua ſalute incarnatum atque Hominem factum amplectantur, atque omni obſequio venerentur. *Bull. Judic. Eccleſ.* p. 286.

CHAP. VI. St. *John* himſelf ſeems to go upon the ſame general Principle, where he ſays, *Whoſoever denieth the Son, the ſame hath not the Father*[a]. He that throws up the *Belief* of the Privileges granted, does interpretatively throw up the *Privileges* themſelves: This is a Maxim which appears to run through the Writings of all the Fathers, where they are treating of *Hereſies*; and we ſhall find more of it as we paſs along.

In the ſame Epiſtle, the ſame heavenly Man, after expreſſing his Deteſtation of Hereſies in very ſtrong Words, which I have quoted above[b], proceeds to ſet down the Faith of the Church, with reſpect to the *Incarnation* of the Son of God, in theſe remarkable Lines: "For, Jeſus Chriſt, *our God*, was "conceived of *Mary*, according to the divine "Diſpenſation, being of the Seed of *David*, "and of the *Holy Spirit*[c]. Againſt the Impugners of this Doctrine, the good Man, in the ſame place, threatens Hell and Damnation[d]: So little was he acquainted with that *Neutrality* and *Indiffe ence* which has ſince too much prevailed. Yet he was a Perſon of admirable *Lenity* in his Temper, and of a moſt exalted *Charity*; which he proved by that very inſtance, ſince nothing could have

[a] 1 John ii. 23. [b] See above. p. 278.

[c] Ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν, Ἰησοῦς ὁ χριστὸς, ἐκυοφορήθη ὑπο Μαρίας, κατ' οἰκονομίαν θεοῦ, ἐκ σπέρματος μὲν Δαβὶδ, πνεύματος δὲ ἁγίου. Ignat. ad Epheſ. c. xviii.

[d] Ὁ τοιοῦτος, ῥυπαρὸς γενόμενος, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον χωρήσει, ὁμοίως καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ. c. xvi.

extorted

extorted thoſe Expreſſions from him, but a moſt ardent Zeal for the Salvation of Souls [e]. CHAP. VI.

A. D. 155. *Juſtin*, the *Philoſopher*, afterwards *Martyr*, is our next conſiderable Writer. His real and great Concern for the Doctrine of our Lord's *Divinity*, appears all the way through his famous *Dialogue* with *Trypho* the *Jew*; being the Relation of a Conference he had held at *Epheſus* with that moſt celebrated Rabbi [f]. He makes no expreſs mention of the *Ebionites*, and ſo does not condemn them by *Name*; but he does it more than once, by neceſſary Inference and Implication. I forbear to cite the Places, chuſing rather, for brevity ſake, to refer the Reader to Biſhop *Bull*, who has produced them at length, and deſcanted properly upon them [g].

But there is one Paſſage in *Juſtin*, which requires a more particular Conſideration, becauſe the *Socinians* and *Remonſtrants* have fre-

[e] In ſeductores, et ſeductos iſtos intonat, et ignem ipſis inextinguibilem minatur vir alioqui mitiſſimus, quod primam Religionis Chriſtianæ veritatem, cujus præcipue τέλος καὶ ἐφαίρεμα eſſe debet, monente Apoſtolo, omnis vero Chriſti Eccleſia—— nempe *magnum illud pietatis myſterium, Deum in carne manifeſtatum* fuiſſe convellere niterentur. Qui iſtam impietatem moliti ſunt, duo fuere, *Ignatii* ætate, Hæreticorum genera, ſibi invicem non minus quam veritati repugnantium. Alii divinam quandam ſervatori noſtro naturam attribuentes, *humanam* prorſus ipſi detraxerunt—— quâ in Hæreſi fuere *Simoniani*, *Menandriani*, *Saturniniani*, aliique, quos propterea omnes δοκητὰς et φανταστὰς poſterior ætas appellavit: Alii contra, humanam tantum in Domino *Jeſu* naturam agnoſcebant, ut *Cerinthiani*, et *Ebionæi*. Utra Hæreſis pernicioſior fuerit, haud facile dictu. *Bull.* Judic. c. 1. p. 287.

[f] Euſeb. E. H. L. iv. c. 18.

[g] Bull. Judic. Eccleſ. c. vii. ſ. xi. xii. p. 349, &c.

quently

CHAP. VI. quently boasted of it, and do so to this Day, as proving, in their Opinion, that those who disowned Christ's proper *Divinity*, or even *Preexistence*, were tolerated in the primitive Church, were received as Brethren and Fellow-Christians. This Pretence has been largely and solidly confuted by Bishop *Bull*; and as there is scarce room for adding any thing (the Question being in a manner exhausted) so neither is there much need of any Reinforcement. But it may be of some Use to recapitulate what that learned Prelate has said, as also to take some brief notice of what the Adversaries have since attempted, in order to depreciate and disparage it, instead of making any just reply to it. I shall first cite the whole Passage of *Justin*, and then give a summary Account of Bishop *Bull*'s Reasonings upon it, that the Reader may then judge for himself, as to the Force of them. *Trypho*, the *Jew*, in the Dialogue, having a little before told *Justin*, that his Doctrine concerning Christ (that he was *God before the World*, and afterwards became *Man*, and of a *Virgin*) appeared to him a very great Paradox, and contrary to common Sense, *Justin* replies as follows [h]: "I

[h] Οἶδ' ὅτι παράδοξος ὁ λόγος ἐμοῦ εἶναι, καὶ μάλιστα τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς γένης ἡμῶν, οἵτινες τὰ τῆ θεῆ ὅτε νοῆσαι ὅτε ποιῆσαι περὶ ἐνεθυμήθη, ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν διδασκάλων ὑμῶν, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς ἔφη, ἤδη μέντοι, ὦ Τρύφων, εἶπον, ἐκ ἀπάλλυται τὸ τοιοῦτον [τῆτον] εἶναι χριτὸν τῆ θεῆ, ἵνα ἀποδείξαι μὴ δύναμαι ὅτι καὶ προϋπῆρχεν ὑὸς τῆ ποιητῆ τῶν ὅλων, θεὸς ὤν, καὶ γεγέννηται ἄνθρωπος διὰ τῆς παρθένε. ἀλλὰ ἐκ ποιῶ ἀποδικνυμένε ὅτι ἔτος ἐτὶν ὁ χριτὸς ὁ τῆ θεῆ, ὅτις ἔτος ἔτι, ἵνα δὲ μὴ ἀποδικνύ-

" I am very ſenſible that this Account will look like a Paradox, and more eſpecially to " thoſe of your Nation, who are in no Diſpoſition either to apprehend or follow the " Things of God, but the Dictates only of " your own *Rabbins*, as God himſelf proclaims [1]. Nevertheleſs (ſaid I to *Trypho*) my " Argument does not fall, as to his being the " *Meſſiah* of God, tho' I ſhould not be able " to prove that the Son of the Maker of the " Univerſe *pre-exiſted*, being *God*, and was " born a Man of the *Virgin*: but after it has " been once fully proved that he is the *Meſſiah* of God (whatever elſe he be) tho' I " ſhould not farther demonſtrate his *Pre-exiſtence*, and his condeſcending to become " Man of like Paſſions with us, taking Fleſh " upon him according to the Father's " good Pleaſure, all that you can juſtly " ſay is, that I am ſo far in an Error; but " you ſhould not hereupon deny that he " is the *Chriſt*, appearing as a Man born of " human Parents, and approving himſelf as CHAP. VI.

δικαίως ὅτι προϋπῆρχε, καὶ γεγεννῆσθαι ἄνθρωπον ὁμοιοπαθῆ ἡμῖν. φάρμα ἔχων, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς βουλὴν ὑπάρχοντα, ἐν τούτῳ πεπλανῆσθαι μοι μόνον λέγειν δίκαιον, ἀλλὰ μὴ ἀρνεῖσθαι ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς, εἰκὸς φαίνεται ὡς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γεγεννῆσθαι, καὶ ἐκλογῇ γενόμενος ἵνα τὸν χριστὸν εἶναι ἀποδεικνύηται, καὶ γάρ εἰσί τινες, ὦ φίλοι, ἔλεγον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἡμετέρου [ὑμετέρου] γένους ὁμολογοῦντες αὐτὸν χριστὸν εἶναι, ἄνθρωπον δὲ ἐξ ἀνθρώπων γινόμενον ἀποφαινόμενοι· οἷς ἀ συντίθεμαι οὐδ' ἂν πλεῖστοι ταῦτα μοι ἀδιάλειπτοι εἴπωσι, ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνοις δόγμασιν κεκελεύσμεθα, ὑπ' αὐτοῦ τοῦ χριστοῦ πεῖθεσθαι, ἀλλὰ τοῖς διὰ τῶν μακαρίων προφητῶν κηρυχθεῖσι καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ διδαχθεῖσι. Juſt. Dial. p. 140. Jebb. 234. Thirlby.

[1] Iſai xxix. 13.

" the

CHAP. VI. "the chosen *Messiah*. For, said I, My good "Friends, some there are of our Profession "(*of your Nation* [k]) who acknowledging him "to be the *Messiah*, yet conceive of him as of "a Man born of human Parents: whom "however I assent not to, no not though "there were ever so many concurring to "tell me so [l]; since we are commanded by "Christ himself, not to submit to the Doc-"trines of Men, but to what the holy Pro-"phets have delivered, and himself hath "taught us.

This is the famous Passage, from whence (as I have said) the *Socinians* and *Remonstrants* have endeavoured to draw an Argument for *Neutrality* or *Indifference* concerning the Article of Christ's *Divinity*; imagining that the Impugners of that Doctrine were received by *Justin* and the Church in his Time, as Brethren and Fellow-Christians. But there is nothing in this Paragraph of *Justin* to sup-

[k] Ἀπὸ τοῦ ὑμετέρου γένους, is undoubtedly the true Reading; warranted by the *Propriety* of the Expression, and *Justin*'s usual *Phraseology*, and the whole Turn and *Texture* of the Sentence. See *Bull. Judic. Eccl.* c. vii. Sect. 6. p. 346. *Thirlby*, in locum.

Nevertheless, one might perhaps, in Prudence, wave this just Criticism, since nothing depends upon it, as to the main Cause (except it be, to make *Justin* write Sense so far) but the insisting upon it, gives the Adversaries a Handle for dropping the *Material* Things, and making some Shew of an Opposition upon this Bye-point, as if all depended upon it.

[l] I prefer the rendring here given before the common one, taking the Hint from the ingenious Mr. *Thirlby* in his Notes upon the Passage. The common rendring is; *neither would it be admitted by the Generality,* [of Christians] *who are in my Sentiments:* The Sense is flat.

port

port ſuch Fancies. Let it be obſerved in the first Place, that the Perſons whom *Juſtin* here ſpeaks of, as believing in *Jeſus* as the *Meſſiah*, but denying his Birth of a *Virgin*, and his *Pre-exiſtence*, were moſt certainly the *Ebionites* of his Time. Their Hypotheſis, and theirs only, exactly anſwers the Deſcription here given; as Biſhop *Bull* has demonſtrated at large [m]. This premiſed, we may now proceed to lay down the *Arguments* urged by Biſhop *Bull*, againſt the Conſtruction offered by the *Remonſtrants*, and next ſubjoin a Summary of the *Solutions* he has given in anſwer to their Objections. CHAP. VI.

1. As the Paſſage it ſelf in *Juſtin*, is very far from declaring in expreſs Terms, or by any *certain* Conſequence, what ſome collect from it, ſo it is very unlikely, that *Juſtin* ſhould be *ſingular* in his Sentiments on that Head, directly thwarting the Sentiments of *Ignatius* before him, of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* of the ſame Century with him, and, in ſhort, of all the Antients beſides him, who have conſtantly condemned thoſe *Ebionite* Principles, as pernicious and Heretical [n].

2. The Argument drawn from this Paſſage, by our Adverſaries, if it proves any thing at all, proves *too much*; which is a certain Sign that it is faulty: For it proves that even thoſe who denied our Lord's Birth of a *Virgin* (A Truth atteſted to by the *Prophets* and *Evan-*

[m] *Bull. Judic. Eccleſ.* c. vii. ſ. 8. p. 347.
[n] See *Bull. Judic.* c. vii. ſ. 5. p. 345.

geliſts,

CHAP. VI. *geliſts*, and moſt religiouſly held by the antient *Church*) were received as *Fellow-Chriſtians*; which is highly abſurd [n].

3. It is very obſervable, that the *Ebionites* rejected three of the *Goſpels*, receiving only St. *Matthew*'s (or what they called ſo) and that curtail'd. They rejected likewiſe all St. *Paul*'s Writings, reproaching him as an Apoſtate [o]. How unlikely is it, that *Juſtin* ſhould own ſuch Reprobates as thoſe were, for Fellow Chriſtians! *Epiſcopius* was himſelf ſenſible of this Difficulty, and could not but acknowledge it plainly abſurd, that *Juſtin*, and the Church of his Time, ſhould hold any Communion with ſuch an ungodly Race of Men as the *Ebionites* were [p]. What Salvo therefore had he for it? None, but the denying that *Juſtin* was there ſpeaking of the *Ebionites*; tho' it is a plain Caſe, that he was: Therefore *Epiſcopius* was here caught in his

[n] Qui enim hic a *Juſtino* notantur dogmatiſtæ, ſervatorem noſtrum, non modo *Hominem* tantum, ſed *Hominem ex Hominibus* genitum, hoc eſt, ex Viri et Fœminæ concubitu, communi Hominum more, natum eſſe affirmarunt. Hinc igitur, ſi recte ex hoc loco *Remonſtrantes* argumentantur, ſequetur, *Juſtinum* Eccleſiamque *Juſtini* tempore, cum iis qui ſuſque deque habita ſacrorum *Evangeliſtarum* Auctoritate, ſpretaque Apoſtolicæ et Catholicæ Eccleſiæ conſtanti concordique Traditione Chriſtum Hominem ex *Maria Virgine* natum eſſe negare auſi ſunt, communionem coluiſſe: Quod quiſquis ſerio ſibi perſuaſerit, ad Anticyras plane relegandus eſt. *Bull* ibid. Sect. 3. p. 343.

[o] *Ebionæi*—— ſolo eo quod eſt ſecundum *Matthæum* Evangelio utuntur, et Apoſtolum *Paulum* recuſant, Apoſtatam eum legis dicentes. *Iren.* l. i. c. 26. Conf. *Epiphan.* Hær. xxx. 13. *Euſeb.* E. H. l. iii. c. 27. *Origen.* contra Celſ. l. v. p. 274. *Theodorit. Hæret. Fab.* l. ii. c. 1.

[p] *Vid.* Reſponſ. ad ſpecim. Calumn. p. 296.

own

own Snare, as Biſhop *Bull* juſtly obſerves, re- CHAP. VI.
torting his own Conceſſions upon him, with irreſiſtible Force [q].

4. Add to this, that the *Liturgies* then uſed in the Church, were ſo full and expreſs for the *Divinity* of Chriſt, that there is no Likelihood that the *Ebionites* ſhould join in them; neither could they do it without ſolemn Mockery. See this Argument drawn out at large, in Biſhop *Bull* [r].

5. If the Church would have communicated with the *Ebionites*, the *Ebionites* would not with them: And therefore *Juſtin* could never have intended to call them *Brethren*. See this alſo explained at large in Biſhop *Bull* [s]. Theſe are the Reaſons which that incomparable Prelate has urged againſt the *Socinian*, or *Epiſcopian* Conſtruction of the Paſſage in *Juſtin*. But as it is not always ſufficient to demonſtrate a *Truth*, and leave it to ſhift for itſelf, without *reconciling* it, and *clearing* it from *Objections*; we may next go on to ſpecify the Solutions given to the Difficulties pleaded on the other ſide.

1. It is pleaded, that according to *Juſtin*, a Perſon might reaſonably be ſuppoſed the *Meſſiah*, tho' no more than a *Man*. But to this it is anſwered, that *Juſtin* nowhere aſſerts that ſuch a Thing could be ſuppoſed conſiſtently with *Scripture*, or *good Senſe*. No;

[q] Vid. *Bull.* Append. ad c. vii. Sect. 9. 357.
[r] *Bull.* ibid. p. 353. [s] *Bull.* ibid. p. 349. Conf. p. 348.

his

CHAP. VI. his conſtant Doctrine is, and which he every where labours and contends for, that the *Meſſiah* is, and muſt be God[t]. But ſince the *Jews*, with whom he was diſputing, had taken up low Notions of their expected *Meſſiah*, *Juſtin* urged it againſt *Trypho*, as an Argument to *Him*, and ſuch as upon his Principles He could not gainſay, that he might receive *Jeſus* (as his *Ebionite* Countrymen had done) for the *Meſſiah*, tho' he diſowned his *Godhead*. So there was no neceſſity for his continuing in *Judaiſm*, tho' he would not admit the *Divinity* of *Jeſus*.

2. It is pleaded, that thoſe Impugners of Chriſt's *Divinity*, are ſtyled *Men of our Profeſſion*, that is, *Chriſtians*; and therefore he admitted them as Fellow-Chriſtians. To ſay nothing here of the *truer* reading *(Men of your Nation)* there is no Conſequence in the Argument. The *Ebionites* were *Chriſtians* in a large Senſe, Men of *Chriſtian Profeſſion*, nominal Chriſtians; as *Juſtin* allowed the worſt of Hereticks to be[u]: And this is all he could mean by allowing the *Ebionites* to be Chriſtians[v].

3. It is pleaded, that *Juſtin* ſignified his Diſſent from them very faintly, and coldly *(whom I aſſent not to* expreſſing no Deteſtation or Abhorrence of the Men, or of their

[t] See this explained at large in *Bull*, c. vii. p. 344, 345.
[u] *Vid.* Dialog. p. 100, 244, 245. Jebb. alias, 208, 311, 312. Apolog. i. p. 43. Edit. Thirlby.
[v] *Vid.* Bull. Judic. c. vii. ſ. 6. p. 346.

Prin-

Principles. To which it may be anſwered, CHAP. VI.
1. That he expreſſes himſelf as ſtrongly here, as he does in another Cauſe of great Moment, againſt thoſe who denied that the World was created [w]. 2. As *Juſtin* here expreſſed no Abhorrence, ſo neither did he expreſs any *Approbation* of them; as his way was when he *diſſented* from [x] Perſons of the Church, with whom he held Communion: So we may fairly ſet one *Negative* Argument againſt another. 3. There might be ſpecial Reaſons, why, in that particular Caſe, he did not launch out into Satyr and Invective againſt the *Ebionites*. He was endeavouring to perſuade *Trypho*, to come ſo far at leaſt as the *Ebionites* had done, rather than continue an hardned and deſperate *Jew*: It would have been highly improper, in the conducting an Argument of that kind [y], to have fallen ſeverely upon the *Ebionites*, whoſe Tenets he was making ſo good Uſe of [z]. 4. Yet even in that very Paſſage, he gave oblique Intimations of his heartily diſapproving the *Ebionite* Principles. He rebukes *Trypho* and his Aſſociates with ſome Tartneſs, as ſhutting their Eyes againſt the *Truth*, and being ſlow to perceive the *Things of God*, for their not

[w] Ἢ καὶ τὸν κόσμον σὺ αἰγίνητον λέγεις; ἴσὶν οἱ λέγοντες, ἐ μίντοί γε ἀυτοῖς συγκατατίθεμαι ἐγό. Juſt. Dial. p. 20. alias 148.

[x] *Vid.* Juſtin. Dial. p. 243. alias 311.

[y] See Thirlby, upon the Paſſage, p. 243.

[z] See a like Argument urged by *Novatian* from the Doctrine of the *Docetæ*; which he heartily deteſted, but yet contented himſelf, in that Inſtance, while making uſe of it, with ſaying, *Quod tamen nos non probamus*, (c. 23.) which was ſufficient: More would have been there and then improper.

CHAP. VI admitting the *Divinity* of Jeſus Chriſt, ſo fully proved from the *Old* Teſtament: What then could he think of the *Ebionites*, who had both *Old* Teſtament and *New* before them, and yet rejected their Lord's Divinity [a]? Then again, in the cloſe of the ſame Paſſage, *Juſtin* plainly enough intimates, that thoſe who denied Chriſt's *Divinity*, or Birth of a *Virgin*, rejected the Doctrine of the *Church*, and of the *Prophets*, and of *Chriſt* himſelf, to follow *human* Inventions, or Doctrines of Men [b]. So if *Juſtin* did not condemn the *Ebionites* with hard Words, he did it with hard Arguments, which were altogether as forcible, and ſerved his Purpoſe better. Upon the whole therefore, nothing can be inferred, from this Paſſage of *Juſtin*, to countenance the receiving of the *Ebionites*, or their Succeſſors, to Chriſtian Communion: The contrary is evident as the Light. And, indeed it would be hard to ſay for what Purpoſe *Juſtin* wrote that very *Dialogue* (the main Subſtance whereof is taken up in proving the *Divinity* of Chriſt) if after all, he thought it an Article of ſlight Moment, and ſuch as was not of Weight ſufficient to be made a Term of Chriſtian Communion. But enough of this.

Biſhop *Bull*'s Anſwer to *Epiſcopius* has met with the Eſteem of the learned World [c], and nothing like a juſt Reply has been attempted

[a] Compare *Bull*, c. vii. ſ. 4. p. 344.
[b] Compare *Bull*, ibid. p. 347.
[c] See *Nelſon*'s Life of *Bull*, p. 383, &c.

ſince;

since: Only *le Clerc*, above twenty Years after, writing an *Ecclesiastical History* [d], was pleased, in passing, to make some brief Strictures upon it, and to bring up again some of the former Pretences, which had long been exploded. He deals more in Hints, and Insinuations, than in Arguments, or direct Assertions, like one who had an Inclination to put some Fallacy upon his Readers, but at the same time to provide for a Retreat. He hints, [e] that the Persons whom *Justin* there speaks of, might be *Nazaræans*. He was very sensible where the Difficulty pressed, if they were supposed to be *Ebionites*; as Bishop *Bull* had fully proved them to have been. But whether they are to be called *Ebionites*, or *Nazaræans*, they were undoubtedly Men that denied Christ's *Divinity*, and his Birth of a *Virgin*, (as before shewn) and were therefore *Hereticks* in Ecclesiastical Account. As to *Nazaræans*, about whom so much has been boasted of late [f], it will be soon enough to consider how far *Justin* had a View to them, when it can be proved, that their Principles, with respect to Christ, were the same with those which *Justin* there condemns: A hard Thing to make out [g].

[d] Published A. D. 1716.

[e] Non constare an ii, seu *Nazaræi*, seu quicunque alii fuerint, negarent, Præter *hominem ex hominibus natum*, quidquam in *Jesu* fuisse; hoc est, divinam ejus naturam rejicerent, neque enim perspicue hic loquitur *Justinus*. *Cleric.* Eccles. Histor. p. 635.

[f] By *Zuicker*, *Sandius*, *Toland*, *Artemonius*, and others.

[g] Vid. *Mosheim* Vindic. antiq. Discipl. adverss. Toland. c. v, vi. *Buddeus* Eccles. Apostol. p. 545——550. *Mosheim*. Histor. Eccles. Sæc. 1. Par. 2. Sect. i. c. 4. p. 99.

CHAP. VI.

Le Clerc would appear to doubt, whether the Perſons pointed to in *Juſtin*, really denied Chriſt's *divine Nature* or no. It is as plain as poſſible, that they did. But however if they did not, then there is an end of all the *Remonſtrant* Pretences at once: and there is not ſo much as Colour left for ſaying, that *Juſtin* held Communion with the Impugners of Chriſt's *Divinity*.

He goes on to obſerve how mildly and ſoftly *Juſtin* treated them [i], above common *Hereticks*, whom he allowed not to be *Chriſtians*. This is the old *Epiſcopian* Plea [k], which had been abundantly anſwered by Biſhop *Bull*, as *Le Clerc* well knew; tho' he took no notice. Neither does it appear that *Juſtin* believed the *Ebionites* (of whom he ſpeaks) to have been *Chriſtians* in any other Senſe than as other *Hereticks* were, that is, *nominal* Chriſtians, as I have obſerved above.

He proceeds to ſay, that it cannot be determined, for want of ancient Evidences, how far thoſe *Nazaræans* (for ſo he chuſes to call them) were *tolerated* [l]. Directly falſe, or ſo-

Conf. *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 547.
Bull Judic. Eccl. c. ii. ſ. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Primit. Trad.* c. i. ſ. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.
Huetius in not. ad Origen. comment. p. 74.
Lequien. differt. Damaſcen. vii. p. 94, &c.

[i] Eum minime in eos invectum, ut in *Baſilidianos*, *Saturnilianos*, *Valentinianos*, et *Marcionitas*, quos *Chriſtianos* fuiſſe negat. ibid. p. 635.

[k] Reſponſ. ad Specim. Calumn. p. 296.

[l] Sed quatenus eos ſerrent alii Chriſtiani, aut qui ipſi ſe erga alios gererent, ob veterum monumentorum penuriam, nobis non conſtat. p. 636.

phiſtica

phiſtical. Indeed, as to *Nazaræans*, ſince it is diſputable who, or what they were, or how far orthodox [1], (Accounts being different, and ſometimes repugnant) it may be diſputable how they were received by other Chriſtians: But as to ſuch Perſons as *Juſtin* ſpeaks of, (whatever Name we aſſign them) Men that denied Chriſt's *Divinity*, and *miraculous* Conception, it is a very clear Caſe, and fully atteſted by many and undoubted Evidences, that they never were *received* by the Church of Chriſt, but conſtantly rejected as *Antichriſts*, and *Hereticks*. And this is all that we need contend for: The reſt is only playing with Words and Names, and is mere Amuſement, wide of the Point in hand. CHAP. VI.

He goes on to infer, that ſince *Juſtin* was ſo *moderate* in that Caſe, there is no Reaſon now for condemning the *Socinians* or others that impugn Chriſt's *Divinity*: That is plainly his Drift and Meaning, only a little covertly expreſſed [m]. So, tho' he had neither anſwered,

[1] Tho' I ſay *diſputable*, becauſe very learned Men have been much divided about the *Nazaræans*, yet I make no queſtion my ſelf, but the *Nazaræans* were the Remains of the firſt Chriſtians of *Jeruſalem*, were intirely orthodox in the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity*, and directly oppoſite to the *Ebionites*. So far, at leaſt, Biſhop *Bull* and *Lequien* have, in my Judgment, clearly and ſatisfactorily proved. So that to obtrude the *Nazaræans* upon us here, inſtead of *Ebionites*, is only raiſing a Miſt, to confound weak Readers.

[m] Interim cum *Juſtinus* de ejuſmodi hominibus, non exiguo errore laborantibus, tanta verborum *moderatione* loquatur, invidia non eſt iis facienda, qui *Jeſum* non tantum *Meſſiam*, ſed etiam a Spiritu Sancto, præter naturæ ordinem, conceptum credentes, totumque

CHAP. VI. ſwered, nor conſidered the Reaſons offered by Biſhop *Bull* againſt any ſuch Inference from *Juſtin*'s Words, nor the *Solutions* given to the *Objections* before made, nor indeed had advanced any thing beyond mere Surmiſes and Shuffles; yet he draws the ſame *Concluſion*, which the *Remonſtrants* had before done, as if he had proved his Point to Satisfaction.

But leſt he ſhould ſeem intirely to have paſſed over Biſhop *Bull*'s Performance, he ſingles out a Bye-point[n], (not material in reſpect of the main Thing) to conteſt with him. It is the Emendation of a Word, which Biſhop *Bull* had offered, and juſtified, like a judicious Writer and a true Critick, to make his Author ſpeak Senſe, rather than to ſupport the main Cauſe, which did not need it: I ſay, *Le Clerc* ſingles out that, to diſpute upon, and that is all. And even there he is entirely wrong, as has been abundantly ſhewn by a learned Hand[o], for which Reaſon I ſhall ſay no more of it. But allowing Thoſe Gentlemen their abſurd *Reading*, the Cauſe ſtands juſt where it did; and they are as far off as ever, from being able to prove from that Paſſage in *Juſtin Martyr*, that the *Socinians* ſhould be received as *Fellow-Chriſtians*.

totumque novum Teſtamentum admittentes, et ad ejus normam mores componentes, æternis ſuppliciis addicere non audent; eo tantum quod in arduo capite, de *divina* Chriſti natura, a ceteris diſſentiant, quia eam in novi Teſtamenti libris doceri non putant. *Clerici Eccleſ Hiſt.* p 636.

[n] *Clerici* Eccleſ Hiſtor p. 636.

[o] *Thirlby*, in notis ad Juſt. Mart. p. 234.

I had almoſt forgot to take notice of two In- CHAP. VI.
ſinuations dropped by *Le Clerc* in their Favour, *viz.* That they receive the *whole Canon* (which the *Ebionites* did not) and they lead good *moral Lives.* As to the firſt, it is only maintaining their *Hereſy* with greater *Art*, and more exquiſite *Subtlety*, and in a way which may do the more *Miſchief*, becauſe the *Poiſon* is concealed: The antient Hereticks were *plainer* Men. Beſides, any one who has ſeen the *five Letters of Inſpiration*, and knows alſo what Freedom that Author has taken with the *ſacred Writers*, in his Comments, and elſewhere, will conceive no high Opinion of his Veneration for the *Scriptures:* It is keeping them indeed, for the ſaving of Appearances, but in order to *expoſe* them the more inſidiouſly.

As to a good *moral Life*, that is, a *partial Obedience*, it avails nothing, while maintaining of Hereſies is itſelf *immoral Practice*, both againſt God and Man: Beſides that the natural Conſequence of *Socinianiſm* is *Deiſm*; which leads to all *Immorality*. And this diſtant, and almoſt inſenſible way of introducing *Deiſm*, is the moſt dangerous of any: For, thouſands perhaps may be thus led by ſlow and almoſt imperceptible Degrees into it, who could not have been brought to it by the ſhorter, coarſer Methods. But I paſs on.

There is another Gentleman, who after *Le Clerc*, has appeared on the ſame ſide. He calls himſelf *Artemonius* in his laſt Piece[p], as

[p] Initium Evangelii S. *Joannis* reſtitutum per *L. M. Artemonium*, A. D. 1726.

CHAP. VI. in another, long before, *Lucas Mellierus*, and is known to be *Samuel Crellius*, deſcended from the famous *John Crellius*. He hath here acted a more ungenerous part than *Le Clerc* himſelf had done. He pretends, *Firſt*, that *Le Clerc*, (who had ſcarce touched the main Things, as I have ſhewn) had *confuted* Biſhop *Bull*; and next inſinuates, that the Biſhop had laid *violent* Hands upon the Text of *Juſtin*, only to ſerve his Hypotheſis: Which is untrue in both its Parts. For, the Biſhop's Correction is undoubtedly right: Or if it were not, yet nothing depends upon it, the main Cauſe being perfectly ſecure without it. In the laſt place, he takes notice of Mr. *Thirlby*'s Reply to *Le Clerc*, and contents himſelf with a kind of faint Promiſe to make ſome Rejoinder [q]. I ſhall only remark, that when a Perſon ſo well diſpoſed for any *impracticable* Undertaking (as appears by his ſtrange Attempt [r] upon *John* i. 1.)

[q] Poſt Apoſtolorum Tempora, pro Chriſtianis in Eccleſia tolerandis [*Ebionæi*] habebantur; ut ex illo celebri apud *Juſtinum Martyrem*, in Dial. cum Tryphone, loco p. 267. eſt manifeſtum. Quem *Georg. Bullus* magno conatu fruſtra convellere nititur, et *violentam* ei infert manum, vocem ἡμιτέρων, quia ſuæ Hypotheſi eſt contraria, in ὑμετέρων mutans, confutatus etiam a celeberr. *Clerico* Hiſt. Eccl. ad Ann. cxl. Cui quidem vir clariſſ. *Styanus Thirlby* pro *Bullo* reſpondit: Verum ſint quæ *Thirlbyo* reponi, et præterea plura in hanc rem afferri poſſent: Quod fortaſſe aliquando fiet, &c. *Artemonius*, p. 516.

[r] It is an Attempt to make an Emendation (θεὸς ἦν ὁ λογος, inſtead of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λογος) againſt all the *Manuſcripts* of the New Teſtament, againſt all the *Verſions*, againſt all the *Quotations* from Antiquity, in a very *critical* Paſſage, (where, if any where, ſome Remains of ſuch a reading would have been preſerved among *Ebionites*, *Samoſatenians*, *Arians*, or others, had it ever been known) by mere dint of *Wit*, and Force of *Fancy*, without any Foundation of *Reaſon*, or *Authority*.

declines

declines venturing, and *promiſes* only, and that faintly too, where he has a ſtrong Inclination, it is a certain Sign, that he apprehends more Difficulty than ordinary; and that while he *verbally* triumphed over Biſhop *Bull*, he was wiſer than to engage in cloſe Diſpute. CHAP. VI.

The Reader, I hope, will pardon me for dwelling ſo long upon this Paſſage in *Juſtin.* I thought it worth the conſidering with ſome Care: And I have endeavoured to be as ſhort as the Nature of the Queſtion would permit me to be. I am ſenſible after all, that I have not taken compaſs enough to do full Juſtice to it; and therefore I intreat the Reader, who would have intire Satisfaction about it, to conſult Biſhop *Bull* himſelf, in whom he will find it.

A. D. 176. About this Time[s], very probably, the famous *Irenæus* wrote his Treatiſe againſt *Hereſies*: And he is the firſt that condemns the *Ebionites* by Name; and that not merely for being *immoral* Men, nor merely for rejecting a great part of the *ſacred Canon*, neither yet for denying Chriſt's Birth of a *Virgin*, but for impugning Chriſt's *Divinity*. He excludes them from Church-Communion, and from a State of Grace and Salvation, chiefly, or ſolely, upon that Score. He writes thus: "The ſpiritual Man will paſs Judgment alſo "upon the *Ebionites*. How can they be ſaved,

[s] *Vid.* Oudin. de Scriptor. Eccleſ. Vol. i. p. 207. Dodwell. Diſſert. iv. 360. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. l. v. c. i. p. 66.

"unleſs

CHAP. VI. " unleſs it was God (ὁ θεὸς) that wrought their " Salvation on Earth? or how ſhall Man " come to God, if God had not come to " Man[t]?" *Irenæus* here lays the Charge upon the fundamental Error of the *Ebionites*, their rejecting Chriſt's *Divinity*; an Error which they had imbibed from their Countrymen the *Jews*, and brought with them into Chriſtianity. And this was the principal Ground and Reaſon of their rejecting ſome of the *Goſpels*, particularly St. *John*'s: For they had not yet learned the Art of reconciling the Doctrine of the New Teſtament with their Principles. *Irenæus* excludes the Men from *Salvation* for their *Diſbelief*, abſtracting from the Conſideration of *invincible* Ignorance, or *Sincerity*; which would be impertinently brought in with reſpect to *This* or *That* particular Caſe, ſince it is *common* to all, and makes no Difference as to the abſtract Nature of Things, or our Judgment thereupon: For we are to judge by what we know, leaving Things *ſecret* to God. The *Ebionites* are here cenſured as rejecting *Salvation*, becauſe they rejected the *Belief* of the *divine* Methods appointed for it; agreeable to a Maxim before laid down by *Ignatius*, and before him by St. *John*, as I have obſerved above[u].

[t] Ἀναχρινῶ δὲ καὶ τὸς Ἑβιωναίους· πῶς δύναται σωθῆναι, εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς ἦν ὁ τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ἐργασάμενος; ἢ πῶς Ἄνθρωπος χωρήσει εἰς θεὸν, εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς ἐχωρήθη εἰς ἄνθρωπον; Iren. lib. iv. c. 33. alias 53.

[u] See above, p. 279, 280.

Before

CHAP. VI.

Before I proceed further with *Irenæus*, I would here take notice by the way, how conſiderable a Perſon he was. He is ſaid to have been near the *Apoſtles* Times [v]; for indeed he was born in, or near that Age [w], and was advanced in [x] Years when he wrote his Book againſt Hereſies. The *Chariſmata*, the *miraculous* Gifts were common in his Days, and he himſelf a Witneſs of them in many Inſtances. The Gifts of *Healing* (as reſtoring *Sight* to the *Blind*, and *Hearing* to the *Deaf*, and *Limbs* to the *Cripple*, yea and *Life* to the *Dead)* continued in the Church to his Time; beſides the Gift of *Tongues*, and of *Prophecy*, and of caſting out *Devils*, and the like [y]. He ſpeaks twice of raiſing the *Dead*, and in one place very emphatically thus: "And now, as "I before ſaid, the *Dead* have *riſen*, and have "continued with us many Years [z]:" Thoſe very Gifts are what *Irenæus* more than once appeals to, as Proofs of the true Faith reſting in the Church, in Oppoſition to *Hereticks* who had not the extraordinary Graces, but were detected in their Impoſture, whenever they

[v] Ὁ ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἀποστόλων γινόμενος. *Basil.* de Sp. S. c. 29. ὁ τῶν Ἀποστόλων διάδοχος. *Theodorit. Hæret. Fab.* l. ii. c. 2. Epiphan. Hær. H. xxiv. 8. Vir Apoſtolicorum Temporum. *Hieron.* Epiſt. liii. ad Theodorum. p. 581.

[w] See *Dodwell.* Diſſert. in Iren. diſſ. iii. p. 229.

[x] *Dodwell* Diſſert. iv. p. 291. Oudin. Vol. 1. p. 207.

[y] *Vid.* Iren. l. ii. c. 31. p. 164. alias c. 56. p. 188. l. ii. c. 32. alias 57. l v. c. 6.

[z] Ἤδη δὲ, καθὼς ἔφαμεν, καὶ πλεῖοι ἠγέρθησαν, καὶ παρέμειναν σὺν ἡμῖν ἱκανοῖς ἔτεσι. l. ii. c. 32. p. 166.

Conf. *Dodwell.* Diſſert. ii. p. 165, &c.

pretended

CHAP. VI. pretended to them [a]. He lays it down as a Rule, and a Maxim, that *Truth* then went along with the *Church*, becauſe the *Spirit* of Truth reſted upon it [a]; which is the Argument St. *Paul* himſelf uſes to the like Purpoſe [b]: And it was a very good one at that Time, and as circumſtances then ſtood [c]. But I return.

Irenæus, in another place, ſmartly reproves the *Ebionites* for denying Chriſt's *Divinity*, and his Birth of a *Virgin* [d]. "*God* therefore be-"came Man, and the *Lord* himſelf ſaved us, "giving the Sign of the *Virgin:* And not as "ſome now ſay, who preſume to interpret the "Scripture, *Behold a young Woman ſhall be* "*with Child, and ſhall bear a Son*; as *Theodo-*"*tion* the *Epheſian*, and *Aquila* of *Pontus*, both

[a] Iren. l. ii. c. 31, 32.

[a] Ubi enim Eccleſia, ibi et *Spiritus Dei*, et ubi *Spiritus Dei* illic Eccleſia, et omnis gratia: Spiritus autem veritas. Iren. l. iii. c. 24. alias 40.

[b] Gal. iii. 2.

[c] Nihil ergo prorſus video quod in hoc *Irenæi* noſtri Teſtimonio deſiderare poſſint Adverſarii. Ut enim Eccleſiis *omnibus* ſic *ſolis* datas fuiſſe *Gratias* teſtatur *Irenæus*, nullis nimirum *Hæreticorum* aliorumve quorumcunque Infidelium conventiculis. Inde ſequitur, ut *falſam* fuiſſe Hæreticorum Fidem, ſic contra Eccleſiæ *orthodoxam*, divino conſtitiſſe Teſtimonio. Quæ utinam cogitarent *Sociniani*, aliique hodierni omnes a primævorum Chriſtianorum doctrina in Fide novatores. *Dodwell.* Diſſ. ii. p. 168.

[d] Ὁ θεὸς ὢν ἄνθρωπος ἐγένετο, καὶ αὐτὸς κύριος ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς, δοὺς τὸ τῆς παρθένου σημεῖον. ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἔνιοι φασὶ τῶν τὸν μυθηματιῶν τολμώντων τὴν γραφὴν ἰδὺ ἡ παῖς ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει, καὶ τέξεται υἱὸν, ὡς Θεοδοτίων ἡρμήνευσεν ὁ Ἐφέσιος, καὶ Ἀκύλας ὁ Ποντικὸς, ἀμφότεροι Ἰουδαῖοι προσήλυτοι. οἷς κατακολουθήσαντες οἱ Ἐβιωναῖοι, ἐκ τοῦ Ἰωσὴφ αὐτὸν γεγενῆσθαι φάσκουσι, tantam diſpoſitionem Dei diſſolventes, quantum ad ipſos eſt, fruſtrantes Prophetarum Teſtimonium quod operatus eſt Deus. Iren. l. iii. c. 21. alias 24.

" of them *Jewiſh* Proſelytes, interpret. Whom CHAP. VI.
" the *Ebionites* following, pretend he was be-
" gotten of *Joſeph*, thereby diſſolving, ſo far
" as in them lies, that ſo important Diſpen-
" ſation of God, and fruſtrating the Predicti-
" on of the Prophets which God has brought
" about." Here it is obſervable how ſtrong the Expreſſion is, *God* (ὁ θεὸς) *became Man*, and the *Lord* himſelf ſaved us. So far in Oppoſition to the *Ebionites*, with reſpect to their Denial of Chriſt's *Divinity*: The reſt relates to their Denial of his *miraculous* Conception. Could any one judge from his ſmart Reproof of them in the Cloſe, that thoſe Men were received as *Chriſtian Brethren* in that Age? Abſurd and incredible.

I would only take notice further, that ſome over cenſorious Criticks have ſuſpected that *Irenæus* was here out in his Chronology, and inconſiſtent with himſelf, in making the *Ebionites* to be *Followers* of *Aquila* and *Theodotion*. But *Irenæus* is to be underſtood of the *Ebionites* of his own Time only [d]. The Sect had ſubſiſted long before, but now received freſh Countenance and Encouragement from the Verſions of *Aquila* and *Theodotion*, which they greedily cloſed in with, as favouring their *Hereſy*.

There is a third Paſſage in *Irenæus*, where he again falls upon the *Ebionites*, for their oppoſing Chriſt's *Divinity*, and Birth of a *Virgin* [e], " Vain

[d] Vid. *Moſheim.* Vindic. Antiq. c. vii. p. 179, 180.
[e] Vani autem et *Ebionæi*, unitionem Dei et Hominis, per Fidem

CHAP. VI. " Vain alſo are the *Ebionites*, in not re-
" ceiving the *Union of God and Man*, by
" Faith, into their Souls, but perſiſting ſtill
" in the old Leaven of [common] Genera-
" tion: For they will not underſtand, that
" the *Holy Spirit* came upon *Mary*, and the
" *Power of the Higheſt overſhadowed her*, and
" therefore that which was born of Her is *holy*,
" and is the *Son* of the *Higheſt*, of God the
" Father of all, who wrought his Incarnation,
" and manifeſted a *new* Generation; that as
" by the firſt Generation we had inherited
" *Death*, ſo by this other Generation we might
" inherit *Life*. They then reject the Mixture
" of *heavenly Wine*, content to be no more
" than *earthly Water*, not taking *God* into
" their Mixture, but abiding only in *Adam*
" who was vanquiſhed and expelled Paradiſe.

dem non recipientes in ſuam animam, ſed in veteri generationis perſeverantes fermento; neque intelligere volentes, quoniam *Spiritus Sanctus* advenit in *Mariam*, et *virtus Altiſſimi* obumbravit eam: quapropter et quod generatum eſt, *Sanctum* eſt, et *Filius Altiſſimi*, Dei Patris omnium, qui operatus eſt Incarnationem ejus, et novam oſtendit Generationem; uti quemadmodum per priorem Generationem mortem hæreditavimus, ſic per Generationem hanc hæreditaremus vitam. Reprobant itaque hi commixtionem *Vini cæleſtis*, et ſolam *Aquam ſæcularem* volunt eſſe, non recipientes *Deum* ad commixtionem ſuam; perſeverantes autem in eo qui victus eſt, *Adam*, et projectus eſt de Paradiſo: Non contemplantes, quoniam quemadmodum ab initio Plaſmationis noſtræ in *Adam*, ea quæ fuit a Deo adſpiratio vitæ, unita Plaſmati, animavit Hominem, et Animal rationale oſtendit; ſic in fine, *Verbum Patris* et *Spiritus Dei* adunitus antiquæ ſubſtantiæ Plaſmationis *Adæ*, viventem et perfectum effecit Hominem, capientem perfectum Patrem: ut quemadmodum in animali omnes mortui ſumus, ſic in ſpiritali omnes vivificemur. *Iren.* l. v. c. 1. 293. *alias*, p. 394.

" They

" They conſider not, that as at the beginning CHAP. VI.
" of our Formation in *Adam*, the Breath of
" Life from God, united with the Frame, in-
" livened the Man, and rendred him a ratio-
" nal Creature; ſo at the end, the *Word* of
" the Father and *Spirit* of *God*, united with
" the old Subſtance of *Adam*'s Formation,
" has made a living and perfect Man compre-
" hending the perfect Father; that as in the
" *natural* Man we are all dead, ſo in the *ſpi-*
" *ritual* Man, we may all be made alive.

Here we are to obſerve, that *Irenæus* judged the *Ebionites* to be in a dangerous or deſperate State, on the Account of their not admitting the *Union of God and Man* in the Perſon of Chriſt, on account of their not taking the *divine* Nature in, to ſupply the Imperfections of the human, the *Word* of the Father, the *Spirit* of God to enliven and exalt the human Nature, the old *Adam*. I may remark by the way, that *Irenæus* here ſeems to underſtand *Spirit of God*, and *Holy Spirit* before, of the ſecond Perſon, of the *Logos* himſelf coming down upon the *Virgin*. So the earlieſt Fathers commonly do[f], interpreting *Luke* i. 35. to that Senſe:

[f] Hoc ergo Corpus, in quod inductus eſt Spiritus Sanctus, &c. *Herm.* l. iii. Simil. 5. c. 6.

Ὡι μὲν τὸ πρῶτον πνεῦμα, ἐγένετο σάρξ. Clem. Ep. 2da c. 9.

Τὸ πνεῦμα ἐν, καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὴν ἄλλο τοῦτο θέμις, ἢ τὸν λόγον. Juſt. Mart. Apol. 1. p. 54. alias 75.

Προσλαβὼν δὲ ὁ λόγος, ὑμοιοπαθείας αἴτιος, ἔπειτα καὶ ἑαυτὸν γυμνᾷ, ὅταν ὁ λόγος σὰρξ γένηται. Clem. Alex. Strom. l. v. p. 654.

Qua autem *Spiritus Dei* et *Virtus Altiſſimi*, non poteſt infra Angelos haberi. *Tertul. de Carn. Chriſti.* c. xiv.

Ecce,

CHAP. VI. Senſe: which I the rather note, becauſe ſo their aſſerting Chriſt's Birth of a *Virgin*, and his Pre-exiſting as *Spirit of God*, and *God*, amounted to the ſame Thing. For the Reaſon given by St. *Luke*, (or rather by the *Angel* in St *Luke*) why *Mary* ſhould conceive, tho' ſhe knew not a Man, is, that the *Holy Spirit ſhould come upon her*, that the *Power of the Higheſt* [δύναμις ὑψίστου] ſhould *overſhadow* Her: So that, after this, to deny the Birth of a *Virgin*, amounted, in Conſtruction, to the ſame with denying any ſuch coming of an *Holy Spirit* upon *Mary*, any divine Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt. And hence, I conceive, it is that we ſo often find, in the antient Fathers, thoſe two Doctrines ſo linked together, or ſo intermingled with each other, that they appear, in a manner, but as the ſame Thing twice told, or the ſame Doctrine diverſly expreſſed. The

Ecce, inquiunt, ab Angelo prædicatum eſt, *propterea quod naſcetur Sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei*: Caro itaque nata eſt, Caro utique erit Filius Dei. Immo, de *Spiritu Dei* dictum eſt. Certè enim de *Spiritu Sancto* Virgo concepit; et quod concepit, id peperit: id ergo naſci habebat quod erat conceptum et pariendum; id eſt *Spiritus*, cujus et vocabitur nomen *Emmanuel*, quod eſt interpretatum *nobiſcum Deus*. Caro autem *Deus* non eſt, ut de illa dictum ſit *quod naſcetur Sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei*, ſed ille qui in ea natus eſt, *Deus*. —— Quis Deus in eo natus? Sermo et Spiritus. *Tertul. contr. Prax.* c. 27.

Verbum Dei incarnatum per *Spiritum* illum de quo Angelus refert, *Spiritus veniet in te*, &c. —— ut principalitas nominis iſtius, *Filius Dei*, in *Spiritu* ſit Domini qui deſcendit et venit. *Novat.* c. xx.

Hic in Virgine labitur, carne *Spiritus Sanctus* induitur. *Cyprian. de Idolor. vanit.* ſic. Cod. German. et 4. MSS. Pamel.

Deſcendens itaque de Cælo *Sanctus ille Spiritus*, ſanctam Virginem, cujus utero ſe inſinuaret, elegit. *Lactant.* l. iv. c. 12.

Ebionites

Ebionites denied the Deſcent of the *Logos* upon *Mary*: They rejected the *Divine* Part in Chriſt, admitting only the *Human*. This is what *Irenæus* calls rejecting the *heavenly Wine* (alluding to their celebrating the Euchariſt in *Water* only, without *Wine*[a]) not receiving *God* into their Mixture, but contenting themſelves with the earthly *Adam*, who was caſt out of *Paradiſe*; intimating that the *Ebionites* ſhould as certainly be excluded *Heaven*. The Thought which *Irenæus* goes upon, may be illuſtrated from a Paſſage in *Hippolytus*, which, ſpeaking of *Chriſt*, runs thus: "As it was pro-
" pheſied beforehand, ſo he manifeſted himſelf
" of the *Virgin* and *Holy Spirit*; made a *new*
" *Man* (a ſecond *Adam*) having an *heavenly*
" Nature of the Father, as he is the *Logos*, and
" having an *earthly* one, as of the *old Adam*,
" incarnate of a Virgin. He came into the
" World, and manifeſted himſelf as God[b]."
But to return to *Irenæus*, it is very plain, that he looked upon the Reconciliation of God and Man, as depending intirely upon the Mediator's being *Both* in one[c]: And in how ſtrict a Senſe he underſtood Chriſt to be *God*, is well known to as many as know

[a] Epiphan. Hær. xxx. 16.

[b] Καθ' ἣν οὖν τρόπον ἐπηγγέλθη, κατὰ τοῦτον καὶ παρὼν ἐφανέρωσεν ἑαυτὸν ἐκ παρθένου καὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος, καινὸς ἄνθρωπος γενόμενος· τὸ μὲν ὑφέστιον ἔχων τὸ πατρῷον ὡς λόγος, τὸ δὲ ἐπίγειον, ὡς ἐκ παλαιοῦ Ἀδὰμ διὰ παρθένου σαρκούμενος. οὗτος προελθὼν εἰς κόσμον θεὸς ἐφανερώθη. κ. τ. λ. *Hippolyt.* contr. Noet. c. xvii. p. 18, 19. Conf. Tertullian. de Carn. Chriſti. c. xvii.

[c] Vid. *Iræn.* l. iii. c. 18. alias 20.

any thing of *Irenæus*. But if the *English* Reader desires farther Satisfaction on that Head, he may have it abundantly from Mr. *Alexander*'s Essay on *Irenæus*[a], a very judicious and faithful Performance, a finished Piece in its Kind. I heartily wish that That learned Gentleman had Leisure, as he has Abilities, to draw out more of the *Fathers* in the same way.

A. D. 206, *Tertullian* reckons the *Ebionites* among the *Antichrists*, for denying *Jesus* to be *Son of God*[b]; that is, for impugning the *Divinity* of Christ: For that *Tertullian* understood the Phrase of *Son of God* as applied to Christ, to mean the same as *God of God*[c], is plain from all his Writings. And what he must think of the dangerous State the *Ebionites* were in, by their Heresy in that Article, may appear sufficiently from a Maxim he lays down, that none have *Life* who believe not in the *Son*, and none believe in the Son, who admit not that he is a *Son*[d] in such a Sense as he had mentioned.

[a] Printed for *John Clarke* and *Richard Hett*, A. D. 1727.

[b] At in Epistola eos maxime *Antichristos* vocat qui Christum negarent in carne venisse, et qui non putarent Jesum esse *Filium Dei*: Illud *Marcion*, hoc *Hebion* vindicavit, *Tertul. Præscript.* c. xxxiii.

[c] Hunc ex Deo prolatum dicimus, et prolatione generatum, et idcirco *Filium Dei* et *Deum* dictum, ex unitate substantiæ. —— Ita de Spiritu Spiritus, et *de Deo Deus*, ut Lumen de Lumine accensum. —— Quod de Deo profectum est, *Deus* est, et *Dei Filius*, et unus ambo. Ita de Spiritu Spiritus, et *de Deo Deus*, &c. Tertul. Apol. c. xxi.

[d] Qui *Filium* non habet, nec *vitam* habet: non habet autem Filium, qui eum alium quam *Filium* credit, *Contr.* Prax. c. 30.

CHAP. VI.

He again cenſures the *Ebionites*, as making Chriſt a *mere Man*, and denying that he is the *Son of God* [e]. Where it is obſervable he paſſes over in Silence their denying his Birth of a *Virgin*, or condemns Both their Poſitions in one, as reſolving into the ſame Error. However, the Streſs of his Cenſure lies upon their impugning Chriſt's *divine* Sonſhip, that is, his real and proper *Divinity*: For ſuch was *Tertullian*'s Senſe of *Son of God*, as I before intimated.

In another Place, he ſpeaks of the *Ebionites* as denying Chriſt's Birth of a *Virgin*, but makes That amount to denying his being *Son of God* [f], in his high Senſe of that Phraſe. And the Reaſon why the Denial of the one implied the Denial of the other, (in his way of arguing, common to other *Fathers*) ſeems to have been This; that it would have been utterly *unworthy* of the *Son of God* to have taken *Man* upon him,

[e] Qua autem *Spiritus* Dei, et *Virtus Altiſſimi*, non poteſt infra Angelos haberi, *Deus* ſcilicet et *Dei Filius*. Quanto ergo dum Hominem geſtat minor Angelis factus eſt tanto non, dum Angelum geſtat. Poterit hæc opinio *Hebioni* convenire, qui *nudum Hominem* et tantum ex Semine *David*, id eſt non et *Dei Filium* conſtituit Jeſum. *Tertullian. de Carn. Chriſti*, c. xiv.

[f] Non competebat ex ſemine humano *Dei Filium* naſci, ne ſi totus eſſet Filius Hominis, non eſſet et *Dei Filius*, nihilque haberet amplius *Solomone*, et amplius *Jona*, et de *Hebionis* opinione credendus erat. Ergo jam *Dei Filius* ex Patris Dei Semine, id eſt Spiritu; vacabat enim viri Semen apud habentem Dei Semen. *Tertullian. de Carn. Chriſti*, c. xviii.

[g] Ante omnia autem commendanda erit ratio quæ præfuit, ut *Dei Filius* de *Virgine* naſceretur. *Nove* naſci debebat *novæ* nativitatis dedicator. ——— Concepit igitur *Virgo* et peperit *Emanuelem*, nobiſcum Deum. Hæc eſt nativitas *nova* dum Homo naſcitur

CHAP. VI. except it were by a *Virgin*; Therefore the Denial of the Mother's *Virginity* amounted to a Denial of *God*'s being born of Her; it was making it *abſurd*. From whence we ſee a further Reaſon of what I before hinted, that the two falſe Poſitions of the *Ebionites* were conſidered as near allied, and were condemned in one, as hanging both together, and perhaps one invented for the Sake of the other [h]. The denying the *miraculous* Conception was, by Inference and Implication, denying Chriſt's *Divinity*, as the affirming of the one was conceived to amount to affirming the other. But the later *Ebionites* (as we ſhall ſee) having a mind to reform their Scheme, contrived at length to admit the *miraculous* Conception, and ſtill rejected our Lord's *Divinity*: Which was retaining the main Subſtance of their *Hereſy*, but under a better Appearance than before. We ſhall obſerve preſently what the Church of Chriſt thought of them after that new Reform.

A. D. 249. *Origen* is the firſt that takes notice of the *Ebionites* as divided into *two ſorts* [i], one denying, as before, Chriſt's Birth

tur in Deo, in quo Homine Deus natus eſt; Carne antiqui Seminis ſuſcepta ſine Semine antiquo, ut illam novo Semine, id eſt ſpiritaliter [fort. *ſpiritali*] reformaret, excluſis antiquitatis ſordibus, expiatam. Tertul. de Carn. Chriſti. c. xvii.

[h] See what the learned *Vitringa* ſays of *Cerinthus*'s denying the miraculous Conception, Obſerv. Sacr. l. v. c. 12. ſ. 6. p. 145, 146. Edit. ult.

[i] Οὗτοι δὲ εἰσὶν οἱ διττοὶ Ἐβιωναῖοι, ἤτοι ἐκ παρθένου ὁμολογοῦντες ὁμοίως ἡμῖν τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ἢ ἐκ ἔτι γεγεννῆσθαι, ἀλλ' ὡς τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους, Orig. contr. Celſ. p. 272. Conf. comment. in Matth. p. 427.

of

of a Virgin, the other admitting it. But ſtill he reckons *Both* among the pretended Chriſtians [k], and introduces them among other *Hereticks* [l]. But whether or no he charged them with *Hereſy* on account of their denying our Lord's *Divinity*, would not certainly appear, if he had not expreſſed himſelf more fully in ſome other of his Writings. In his Comment upon St. *Matthew*, he takes the like notice of the two ſorts of *Ebionites*, charging Both as rejecting Chriſt's *Divinity* [m], and as *poor* in Faith [n] towards Chriſt Jeſus; alluding to their Name, which ſignifies the ſame as *poor*. But *Pamphilus*, in his *Apology* for *Origen*, produces ſome Paſſages of his, out of his Comments on the *Epiſtle* to *Titus*, where he condemns the *Ebionites* more expreſsly, as *Hereticks*, for their denying Chriſt's *Divinity* [o]. As to any Doubt which may be made about *Pamphilus*'s *Apology*, (appearing only in *Ruffinus*'s Verſion) and the

[k] Orig. ibid. p. 272. [l] p. 271, 272, 274.

[m] Οὐ μὴν καὶ μετὰ τῆς περὶ αὐτῦ θεολογίας, Comm. in Matt. p. 427.

[n] Τῷ Ἐβιωναίῳ πτωχύνοντι περὶ τὴν εἰς Ἰησῦν πίστιν, ibid. 428.

[o] Quid vero ſit *Hæreticus* homo, pro viribus noſtris, ſecundum quod ſentire poſſumus, deſcribamus. Omnis qui ſe Chriſto credere profitetur et tamen alium Deum Legis et Prophetarum, alium Evangeliorum Deum dicit, &c. —— hujuſmodi homines *Hæreticos* deſignamus——— unum idemque credendum eſt de eo qui de Domino noſtro Jeſu Chriſto falſi aliquid ſenſerit: ſive ſecundum eos qui dicunt eum ex *Joſeph* et *Maria* natum, ſicut ſunt *Hebionitæ* et *Valentiniani*; ſive ſecundum eos qui primogenitum eum negant et *totius creaturæ Deum*, et *Verbum*, et *Sapientiam* quæ eſt initium viarum Dei, antequam aliquid fieret ante ſæcula fundatam, atque ante omnes colles generatam, ſed *Hominem* ſolum eum credentes. *Pamphil. Apolog.* p. 226. Edit. Bened. *Conf.* Comment. in Joann. p. 397.

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Credit due to it, I refer the Reader to Biſhop *Bull*, who has largely diſcuſſed that Queſtion, and has ſufficiently maintained the Authority of that *Verſion* [p]. As to *Origen*'s own Orthodoxy in the Article of *Chriſt*'s *Divinity*, it has been abundantly vindicated, and cleared from all reaſonable Exception [q].

A. *D.* 290. I ſhall add but one Writer more, *Victorinus Petavionenſis*, before referred to as ſaying, that St. *John* wrote his Goſpel againſt *Ebion*, among others who were of the *School of Satan* [r]. It is very plain, by his manner of Expreſſion, that he looked upon *Ebion* as a very ill Man and an *Heretick*, being of *Satan*'s School, and condemned by the Apoſtle himſelf. And conſidering how particular St. *John* is, in ſetting forth the *Divinity* of Chriſt, we cannot doubt but *Victorinus*'s Cenſure of *Ebion* reſpects that Article.

I might add many Teſtimonies of *Poſtnicene* Fathers, to confirm what I have been proving, namely, that the *Ebionites* were conſtantly looked upon as *Hereticks* for denying our Lord's *Divinity*. But I chuſe to go no lower than the *Antenicene* Writers, becauſe they are ſufficient, and they are the leſs to be excepted to; and I am willing alſo to conſult the Eaſe of my Readers, as well as to ſpare my ſelf needleſs

[p] Bull Def. F. N. Sect. ii. c. 9. p. 114, &c.
[q] Biſhop *Bull*, Sect. ii. c. 9.
Compare my *ſecond Defence*, Q. xii. p. 347, &c. alias p. 352, &c.
[r] See above, p.

Trouble.

Trouble, I am aware of a Paſſage in St. *Jerome*, which ſeems to ſay, that the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians* were condemned as *Hereticks* upon another Account, not relating to our Lord's *Divinity*[s]: And I obſerve, that the learned *Le Clerc* has endeavoured to make uſe of it[t] for the ſupporting a favourite Hypotheſis, which he appears too fond of. But it is very certain, that *Jerome*'s Words in that Place, if interpreted with utmoſt Rigour, are a perfect Contradiction to all Antiquity, and to what himſelf has aſſerted in other Places of his Works[u]. Some therefore have greatly blamed St *Jerome*[x] for prevaricating in the contradictory Account he here gives; while others, more kindly, and, I think, more juſtly, have endeavoured to bring him off by a candid Conſtruction[y]. Which-ever way we take, there is nothing concerned CHAP. VI.

[s] Si hoc verum eſt, in *Cerinthi* et *Ebionis* Hæreſim delabimur, qui credentes in Chriſto propter hoc ſolum a Patribus anathematizati ſunt, quod legis Cæremonias Chriſti Evangelio miſcuerunt, et ſic nova confeſſi ſunt, ut vetera non amitterent. Quid dicam de *Ebionitis* qui *Chriſtianos* eſſe ſe ſimulant? Uſque hodie per totas Orientis Synagogas inter *Judæos* Hæreſis eſt quæ dicitur *Minæorum*, et a Phariſæis nunc uſque damnatur; quos vulgo *Nazaræos* nuncupant, qui credunt in Chriſtum *Filium Dei*, natum de Virgine *Maria*, et eum dicunt eſſe qui ſub *Pontio Pilato* paſſus et reſurrexit, in quem et nos credimus. Sed dum volunt et *Judæi* eſſe et *Chriſtiani*, nec *Judæi* ſunt nec *Chriſtiani*. Hieronym. ad Auguſt. Ep. lxxiv. Opp. Tom. iv. 623. Bened.

[t] Clerici Eccleſ. Hiſtor. p. 477.

[u] See two Paſſages quoted above, p 251, 252. And compare *Hieronym. contr. Helvid.* Tom. iv. 140.

[x] Moſheim. Vindic. Antiq. contr. Toland. p. 164.

[y] *Bull Judic. Eccl.* c. ii. ſ. 13. p. 300.
Remarks on *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. with Reſpect to Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity: Firſt part continued, p. 78, 79.

CHAP. VI. in it, except it be St. *Jerome*'s Character: For as to the Cauſe we are upon, it is too firmly eſtabliſhed by the Eccleſiaſtical Writers in general, and even *Jerome* in particular (as I before hinted) to be at all weakened by this ſingle Paſſage to the contrary, if it were contrary.

Having ſhewn above, as I humbly conceive, that the *Cerinthians* (with whom I would be underſtood to include the *Ebionites*) were condemned by St. *John* himſelf, for impugning our Lord's Divinity, and having proved further, that the *Ebionites* (with whom I would be underſtood to include the *Cerinthians*) were condemned all along in the Church for the firſt three Centuries; the Concluſion I now draw is, that both *Cerinthians* and *Ebionites* ſtand condemned from the Days of the Apoſtles, and downwards, for the Oppoſition they made to that important Doctrine. After this, it will be leſs needful to prove that others alſo were condemned in like manner for the like Oppoſition to the ſame Doctrine. But ſince the doing it may tend in ſome meaſure to confirm what has been ſaid, I ſhall go on to mention other Impugners of our Lord's *Divinity* within the three firſt Centuries, and a little farther: Only, I ſhall endeavour to be as brief as poſſible in the Account, not to weary the Reader.

A. D. 195. *Theodotus.*

Theodotus a Citizen of *Byzantium*, by Trade a Currier, but a Man of Parts, and compe-

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tently furniſhed with ſecular Learning, having denied his Saviour in Time of Perſecution, and being afterwards upbraided for it, as one that had denied his *God*; to extenuate the Offence, he pretended that he had not denied *God*, but *Man* [a], forthat Chriſt was no more. A miſerable Salvo for a guilty Practice; which inſtead of leſſening his Crime, inhanced it yet more, and was ſo far from removing the juſt Obloquy he before lay under, that it ſerved only to edge and inforce it. However, he hereupon became the Reviver of an *old* Hereſy, or the Ringleader of a *new* one (*new* in Dreſs and Circumſtances) and ſoon after called by the new Name of the *God-denying Apoſtaſy* [b]. The firſt Account we have of this Matter is from a nameleſs Author in *Euſebius*, reaſonably ſuppoſed, upon comparing other Teſtimonies [c], to have been *Caius*, the *Roman* Presbyter, who flouriſhed about *A. D.* 214. Learned Men have inquired how *Caius* could ſay, that *Theodotus* was *Founder* of the *Hereſy* [d], and the *firſt* that made Chriſt a *mere Man*, when it is certain and

[a] Epiphan. Hær. liv. i. Anguſtin. Hær. 33.
Philaſtr. Hær. c. 50.
Damaſcen. Hær. 54.
Synodic. Pappi. c. 3.
Pſeudo-Tertullian, Præſcript. c. liii.
Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 5.

[b] Ἀρτεμίθιος ἀποστασίαν, Euſeb. H. E. l. v. c. 28.

[c] Vid. *Pearſon*, vindic. Ignat. par. 2. p. 23. Opp. Poſth. p. 147, &c. *Cave* Hiſtor. Literar. Vol. i. p. 65.

[d] Τὸν ἀρχηγὸν καὶ πατέρα ταύτης τῆς Ἀρτεμίθιου ἀποστασίας —— πρῶτον εἰπόντα ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν χριστόν. —— πῦ τῆς αἱρέσεως ταύτης εὑρετήν. Euſeb. ibid.

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manifeſt, that both *Cerinthians* and *Ebionites* had done it before him. Some ſay plainly, that *Caius* was guilty of a Blunder [e]: Which indeed is cutting the Diſpute ſhort, and may be a good Way, if there be not a better. Others ſay, that *Theodotus* was really the firſt that made Jeſus a *mere Man*, for that the *Cerinthians* and *Ebionites*, before, admitted of a *ſuperior* Nature, a *Spirit* aſſiſtant from above, reſiding at times in *Jeſus*, which made him more than a common Man [f]. But it will be difficult to prove, either that *Ebion* was in the ſame Scheme with *Cerinthus*, as to the Doctrine of *Æons*, and as to the dividing of *Jeſus* from *Chriſt*, or that he was not exactly in the ſame Principles which *Theodotus* eſpouſed, as to making Chriſt a *mere Man*. *Euſebius*'s Account of the *Ebionites*, and their Tenets [g], ſeems to repreſent their Scheme as being exactly the ſame in that reſpect; and *Theodorit* is very expreſs for its being ſo [h]. only *Theodotus*'s was a little more refined than that of the antienter *Ebionites*, becauſe he allowed the *miraculous* Conception, or Birth of a *Virgin*, which they denied. However, both they and he ſuppoſed Chriſt a *mere* Man: And therefore

[e] *Ittigius* de Hæreſiarchis, Sect. ii. c. 15. p. 261.

[f] *Vitringa* obſervat. Sacr. l. v. c. 10. p. 128. Edit. ult.

[g] Euſeb. E. H. l. iii. c. 27.

[h] Ὁ δὲ Κήρινθος τὸν μὲν Ἰησοῦν ἐξ Ἰωσὴφ καὶ Μαρίας ἔφησι, γενηθῆναι κατὰ κοινὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένεσιν, ἀνωδυνεῖ δὲ τὸν χριστὸν καταλλαδόνα ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν. Ἐβιωναῖοι δὲ καὶ Θεοδοτιανοὶ, καὶ Ἀρτεμωνιανοὶ, καὶ Φωτεινιανοὶ ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον εἰρήκασιν ἐκ τῆς παρθένου τὸν χριστὸν γεγενῆσθαι, Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. v. c. 11. p. 278.

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he was not the *firſt* that taught it. Some therefore think that *Theodotus* is ſaid to be *firſt*, becauſe he was the firſt among the *Gentile* Chriſtians[i]; for *Cerinthus* and *Ebion* were of *Jewiſh* Extract: Which Account appears fair and plauſible. But I conceive, after all, that *Caius* was not conſidering in that Place, who in the Church had firſt taught that Chriſt was a *mere Man*, but who had been the Founder of ſuch a particular Sect, called *Theodotians*, or *Artemonians*, and who had firſt taught them to *deny* Chriſt, under the Pretence of his being a *mere Man*. *Theodotus*, plainly, was their Founder and Leader: He was at the Head of That *Revolt*, the *firſt* Man that undertook to conduct it, and to ſupport it upon that Principle. The other Accounts of *Theodotus* lead to this Senſe, and in the main, ſay the ſame thing that *Caius* does. *Epiphanius* takes notice, that all the other *Chriſtians* who were apprehended and brought to the Queſtion along with *Theodotus*, honeſtly *confeſſed* Chriſt, and ſuffered[k]: He was the *only* Man of the Company, that preſumed to *deny* him, afterwards inventingan odd Salvo for it, being more of an Artiſt in his Way[l], than others were. No one elſe, at that Time, and upon that Occaſion, durſt venture to deny his *God*: He was the *firſt* that then broke

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[i] Bull. Judic. c. iii. ſ. 1. p. 304.

[k] Epiphan. Hær. 54. 1.

[l] Οὗτος ἐν παιδιᾷ Ἑλληνικῇ ἄκρος γινόμενος, ἅμα δὲ ἄλλοις τῶν ἐν ὑμῖν τῇ τότε διωγμῷ μόνος ἐκπεσὼν, μαρτυρησάντων ἐκείνων διὰ Χριστόν. *Damaſcen.* Hæres. 54.

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the Ice, and led the Way [m], inſtructing others to ſay after him, that it was not denying *God*, but *Man*. I know not whether in one Particular, he may not be thought to have exceeded the Irreverence and Impiety of *Ebion*, namely, in his calling Chriſt a *mere Man*, conſidered even in his State of *Exaltation*, when he abjured him. *Ebion* would have called him *God*, ſo conſidered, as having been then *deified*, according to his way of thinking [n]. But *Caius* probably had no View to any ſuch Nicety of Diſtinction, but intended only to ſay, that *Theodotus* was the *Founder* of a *new* Sect, called afterwards by his Name, and Teacher alſo of a *new* Doctrine; *new* as to the Circumſtances, and Application, tho', as to the main Subſtance of it, borrowed from the *Ebionites* before him, or more particularly from the *Alogi*, a Branch of the *Ebionites* [o].

Having ſeen that *Theodotus* was an Impugner of our Lord's *Divinity*, we are next to obſerve, that he was condemned immediately by the Church for it. He was excommunicated by *Victor* then Biſhop of *Rome*, as an *Hereſiarch*: So the ſame *Caius* re-

[m] *Theodotus* quidam, *Byzantinus* genere, denegator Chriſti Dei noſtri in Perſecutione extitit Salvatoris; Qui *cæpit dicere*, docens ita: Communis Homo erat, ut omnes Homines, Chriſtus. *Philaſtr.* Hær. 50.

Doctrinam *introduxit*, qua Chriſtum Hominem tantummodo diceret, Deum autem illum negaret, *Pſeudo-Tertullian*, c. 53.

[n] See *Hilary* de Trin. l. ii. N. 4. p. 789. *Epiphan.* Hær. xxx. N. 18. p. 142.

[o] Θεόδοτός τις, ἀπόσπασμα ὑπάρχων ἐκ τῆς προειρημένης Ἀλόγων αἱρέσεως, Epiphan. Hær. 54.

lates

lates[q]. A Sentence approved by the Churches of Christ: Otherwise *Victor* himself would have been condemned for it, as he was greatly blamed for misapplying the Ecclesiastical Censure in a Case of another Nature, relating to the Time for keeping *Easter*. The Churches and Bishops of those Times were exceeding watchful, and jealous of any *Abuses* of Power in particular Churches, or Men. They were as Checks one upon another, that nothing of Moment should be done by any, which had not the Consent of the rest. This Conduct obliged every one to observe the strictest Caution in any Affair of general Concern, and it tended to keep up the exactest Harmony and Unanimity in the several Churches. But I return. CHAP. VI.

Hippolytus of the third Century, takes notice, in passing, of this *Theodotus*, as a Person that falsified the Truth, and perverted Scripture, in order to countenance his erroneous Doctrine about Christ's being a *mere Man*[r]. He compares the Heretick *Noetus* with *Theodotus*, to make *Noetus* the more odious for following such a Leader in his manner of writing: So that it is plain enough what *Hippolytus* thought of *Theodotus*.

The same *Theodotus* is numbred also in the List

[q] Βίκτωρ τὸν σκυτέα Θεόδοτον, τὸν ἀρχηγὸν καὶ πατέρα ταύτης τῆς ἀρνησιθέου ἀποστασίας ἀπεκήρυξε τῆς κοινωνίας——ἀπεδείκνυε Θεόδοτον τὸν τῆς αἱρέσεως ταύτης εὑρετήν. Euseb. l. v. c. 28. Conf. Theodor. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 5.

[r] Καὶ ταῦτα ἐβούλοντο ἕτω διηγεῖσθαι καὶ αὐτοὶς μισόκωλα γράμμασι,

CHAP. VI. Liſt of *Hereticks* [r] by the Writer of the *Appendix* to *Tertullian*'s Book of *Preſcription*. That *Appendix* is ſuppoſed by ſome [s] to be little elſe but an Extract from our *Hippolytus*'s, *Treatiſe againſt Hereſies*. However that be, the Piece is antient, and of good Value [t]. *Theodotus* is there charged as a *Blaſphemer* againſt Chriſt, for denying him to be *God*, tho' he allowed his Birth of a *Virgin*. It was the *God-denying* Hereſy: And therein lay its eſſential Malignity. Had he ſaid, that Chriſt was an *Angel*, or an *Archangel*, or the higheſt of all *Creatures*, it would have been treating our Lord with ſomething more of Reſpect; but ſtill it would have come infinitely ſhort of his real Dignity, and of the Faith of the Church concerning him, from the beginning. This I obſerve, leſt any Favourer of *Arianiſm* ſhould falſely ſurmiſe, that the Cenſures paſſed upon *Theodotus* and ſuch other Impugners of Chriſt's Divinity, do not affect thoſe who make Chriſt a glorious *Creature*, but thoſe only who ſuppoſe

μενοι, ὃν τρόπον Θεόδοτος ἄνθρωπον ἁπλῶς ψιλὸν ἐκλόμενος. ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐκεῖνοι τὰ νενόηκασιν ἀληθῆ, οὐδ' ὅτοι, καθὼς αὐτοὶ αἱ γραφαὶ ἐλέγχουσιν αὐτῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, μαρτυροῦσαι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. Hippol. contr. Noet. c. iii. p. 7. Conf. Epiphan. Hær. lvii. 2.

[r] Accedit his *Theodotus Byzantius*, qui poſtea quam pro Chriſti nomine comprehenſus negavit, in Chriſtum *blaſpemare* non deſtitit, doctrinam enim *introduxit* qua Chriſtum *hominem* tantummodo diceret, *Deum* autem illum negaret: Ex Spiritu quidem Sancto, natum ex *Virgine*, ſed hominem ſolitarium atque nudum, nulla alia præ cæteris, niſi ſola juſtitiæ Auctoritate. *Pſeudo-Tertullian.* c. 53.

[s] Allix. Fathers vindicated touching the Trinity, p. 99.

[t] Vid. *Dodwell.* Diſſert. de Succeſſ. Pontif. p. 216.

him

him a *mere Man*: Whereas, in Truth, *Theodotus* and the reſt were condemned for the impugning Chriſt's proper and eſſential *Divinity*; a Fault *common* to them and the *Arians*, ſo that Both are concluded under the ſame Cenſure. CHAP. VI.

I may further add, that the Conduct of the Church, with reſpect to the *Praxeans*, *Noetians*, and *Sabellians*, is a Demonſtration of the Truth of what I ſay. Thoſe Men charged the Church as teaching three Gods[v]. Then would have been the Time, and muſt have been, for the Church to declare, (had they ever meant it) that the Father *only* is God, and the Son and Holy Ghoſt *Creatures*. But they ſtudiouſly and conſcientiouſly avoided it, as one ſees in *Hippolytus* and *Tertullian*, and others. And if any Man uncautiouſly, in Debate, happened but to let fall any Expreſſions which ſeemed to lean that way, (as appeared in the famous Caſe of *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria*) the Church of that Time would not bear it, but rejected every Thing of that kind with Abhorrence. They diſtinguiſhed themſelves off from *Sabellianiſm*, but ſo as to avoid the other Extreme, afterwards called *Arianiſm*: A plain Sign and Proof[w] that the proper *Divinity* of Chriſt was what They aimed to ſupport. I may obſerve alſo by the way, that the *Sabellian* Objection

[v] *Tertullian*, contr. Prax. c. iii. Epiphan. Hær. lvii. 62.

[w] See this Argument excellently drawn out by Mr. *Thirlby*, Def. of the Anſw. p. 36, &c.

all

CHAP. VI. all along ſuppoſed and implied, that the *Godhead* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, as well as of the *Son*, was the then received Doctrine. But I return.

There was another *Theodotus*, ſurnamed *Trapezita* (the *Banker*) who was a Diſciple of the former, and who endeavoured to refine upon his Scheme, by the Addition of ſome odd Conceits concerning *Melchizedec*. I ſhall only obſerve farther, that as from the elder *Theodotus* ſome were named *Theodotians*, ſo from the junior *Theodotus* others were called *Melchizedecians* [x].

A. D. 205. *Artemon.*

Artemon, otherwiſe called *Artemas*, was a Diſciple of *Theodotus*, a Reviver or Promoter of the ſame Hereſy. He appears to have been a very warm Man, and of vaſt Aſſurance; or his Followers, at leaſt, were ſuch. For they confidently gave it out, that their Doctrine was as old as the *Apoſtles* [y], and that the Doctrine of Chriſt's Divinity began with Pope *Zephyrin*, that is about A. D. 198. Such Ignorance, if it was mere Ignorance, was pitiable: But there is too much reaſon to ſuſpect, that they knew better. The nameleſs Author in *Euſebius* (ſuppoſed to be *Caius*) well urges [z], that beſides the *holy Scriptures*, older

[x] Vid. *Euſeb.* lib. v. c. 28. *Lequien.* not. ad Damaſcen. Hær. 64. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 6.

[y] Euſeb. l. v. c. 28. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 4.

[z] Euſeb. E. H. l. v. c. 28.

than

than all, there were the Works of *Juſtin* and *Miltiades*, of *Tatian* and *Clemens*, of *Irenæus* and *Melito*, and a great many more, Defenders of Chriſt's *Divinity*, directly confronting their wild Report, and plainly proving to the World, that it was mere Fiction and Romance, too improbable to be offered even to the loweſt of the Populace. And as to their pleading that Pope *Victor*, the immediate Predeceſſor of *Zephyrin*, was on their Side of the Queſtion, he confutes them at once, by obſerving, that *Victor* was the very Perſon who had excommunicated *Theodotus*, their Founder and Leader, for that very Doctrine which they eſpouſed [a]. All I have farther to obſerve of theſe confident Men, is, that they were *cenſured* by the Church of their Time, and not admitted to Communion among faithful Chriſtians. That may reaſonably be inferred from what *Caius* ſays, as before mentioned. But it appears further from what paſſed ſome Years after, in the Caſe of *Paul* of *Samoſata*, when the *Antiochian* Fathers cenſured him for *Hereſy*, and ſent him to ſeek Communion, if he pleaſed, with the *Artemonians* [b], whoſe Sentiments he had taken into, and whoſe *execrable Hereſy* (ſo they call it [c]) he had revived. To which agrees what *Athanaſius*

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[a] Ἦσαν δὲ ὅτοι ἄμφω Θεοδότῳ τῷ σκυτέως μαθηταὶ, τῷ πρώτῳ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ φρενήσει, μᾶλλον δὲ ἀφροσύνῃ, ἀφορισθέντος τῆς κοινωνίας ὑπὸ Βίκτορος, ὡς ἔφην, τοῦ τότε ἐπισκόπου.

[b] Τῷ δὲ Ἀρτεμᾶ ὅτος ἐπιστέλλετο· καὶ οἱ τὰ Ἀρτεμᾶ φρονοῦντες, τούτῳ κοινωνείτωσαν. Euſeb. H. E. l. vii. c. 30.

[c] Τῇ μιαρᾷ αἱρέσει τῇ Ἀρτεμᾶ, Euſeb. ibid.

CHAP. VI. ſays, ſpeaking of the *Arian* Hereſy: This Hereſy, ſays he, was looked upon as *deteſtable*, before the Council of *Nice*, when *Artemas* advanced it [d].

A. D. 242. *Beryllus.*

Beryllus, Biſhop of *Boſtra* in *Arabia*, has been reputed one of thoſe that once denied the *Divinity* of Chriſt; and therefore Biſhop *Bull* takes him in among the reſt [e]. But yet ſtrictly ſpeaking, the Charge againſt him was not that he denied the *Divinity* of Chriſt, but his *proper Divinity* [f]: By which I underſtand his *perſonal* Divinity, or *divine* Perſonality. For *Beryllus*'s Notion was, that the Man *Chriſt Jeſus* was the whole Perſon, a mere human Perſon, which had indeed a *divine Perſon* reſiding in him, *viz.* The Perſon of the *Father*. So, *Beryllus*'s Doctrine was a kind of *Sabellianiſm*; which however in Strictneſs, amounts to a Denial of Chriſt's *Divinity*. For while it allows Him no diſtinct *divine* Perſonality, all that remains is, the *Man* Chriſt with the *Father* indwelling; which at length reſolves into the ſame Doctrine, in the main, with what *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, *Theodotus* and *Artemon* taught as to the proper Perſon of *Jeſus*. It is denying his divine *Sonſhip*, and divine *Perſonality*, which,

[d] Πρὸ τῆς Νικαίας, ἡ αἵρεσις ἦν ϐδελυκτὴ, ὅτι ταύτην Αρτιμᾶς κατεϐάλλετο. Athanaſ. de Synod. p. 733. Edit. Bened.

[e] *Bull. Judic.* c. ii. p. 305.

[f] Μηδὲ μὲν θεότητα ἰδίαν ἔχειν, Euſeb. E. H. l. vi. c. 33.

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in effect, is denying his proper *Divinity*. I the rather note This, becauſe from hence it may appear, that the Church's condemning *Praxeas*, *Noetus*, and *Sabellius*, as guilty of *Hereſy*, proceeded from the ſame pious Zeal for the *Divinity* of Chriſt, as their Condemnation of *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, &c. before: For Both were intended to preſerve that important Article, and to ſecure the baptiſmal Faith in a *real* and *divine* Trinity. *Tertullian* was ſharp enough to ſee, that the *Praxean* Doctrine, under colour of magnifying Chriſt, by advancing him into the *ſame Perſonality* with the Father, in Reality left no *diſtinct* Son at all, more than the Man *Jeſus*, and ſo fell in with *Valentinus*'s Notion, (he might have ſaid, *Cerinthus*'s alſo) which ſeparated *Jeſus* from *Chriſt*, dividing them into two Perſons[s]. All the Difference is, that *Cerinthus*, or *Valentinus* ſuppoſed the *Chriſt* from above to be ſome *Æon*, or inferior *Power* reſiding, occaſionally, with the Man *Jeſus*; while the *Praxeans* ſubſtituted *God the Father* inſtead of that ſuppoſed *Æon*, making him the *Chriſt* from above, conceived to inhabit at times the ſame Man

[s] Undique enim obducti diſtinctione *Patris* et *Filii*—— aliter eam ad ſuam nihilominus Sententiam interpretari conantur: ut æque in *una Perſona* utrumque diſtinguant Patrem et Filium; dicentes Filium *Carnem* eſſe, id eſt *Hominem*, id eſt *Jeſum*; Patrem autem *Spiritum*, id eſt *Deum*, id eſt *Chriſtum*. Et qui unum eundemque contendunt Patrem et Filium, jam incipiunt *dividere* illos potius quam *unare*. Si enim *alius* eſt Jeſus, *alius* Chriſtus, alius erit Filius, alius Pater; quia Filius *Jeſus*, et Pater Chriſtus. Talem monarchiam apud *Valentinum* fortaſſe didicerunt, *duos* facere *Jeſum* et *Chriſtum*, *Tertul. adv.* Prax. c. xxvii.

CHAP. VI *Jeſus.* Which as it comes very near the old *Ebionite* Notion, ſo is it exactly the ſame with what ſeveral of the foreign *Socinians*, and moſt of our *Engliſh* ones have maintained in late Times. Indeed, the *Praxeans* were charged as *Patri-paſſians*, which is a Charge that does not affect the modern *Socinians:* But I apprehend, from the Paſſage of *Tertullian* juſt cited, that the *Praxeans*, to get off from *Patri-paſſianiſm*, learned at length to divide the *Perſons* of Father and Son, and then the Father could be conſidered only as inhabiting *Jeſus*, a mere Man, and a diſtinct Perſon from him. *Sabellianiſm*, and *Photinianiſm*, and *Socinianiſm*, do in reality come at length into one; all reſolving into *Judaiſm:* For the fundamental Error of them all, is the denying the *divine Sonſhip*, and perſonal Divinity of Chriſt; rejecting the eternal ſubſtantial *Logos*, who was with the Father before the World was, and is God from Everlaſting to Everlaſting. I ſay then, that the Zeal ſhewn by the antient Church againſt the *Sabellians* of all Denominations, (as well as their Zeal againſt the more direct Impugners of Chriſt's *Divinity*) is a very ſtrong Argument of their judging the Doctrine of a coeternal Trinity to be an *Eſſential* of the Goſpel. They intended much the ſame Thing by animadverting upon Thoſe, or Theſe; for they ſaw plainly, that the *Divinity* of Chriſt, conſidered as a real Perſon, was as much *undermined* by *Sabellianiſm*, as it was *attacked* by the other. Many and various have been the

the ways of evading and eluding theſe two *prime* Verities, *viz.* That three *real* Perſons are *one God*, and that God and Man is *one Chriſt:* But watchful and honeſt Chriſtians ſtill kept their Eyes fixed upon thoſe ſacred Truths, and would never admit any Doctrine as *true*, which was *contrary* to them, or as *ſufficient*, that was *ſhort* of them. If any one denied Chriſt's *Humanity* (as the *Docetæ*, or *Phantaſiaſtæ*) That was manifeſtly falſe Doctrine, to be rejected at once: But if another admitted his *Humanity* and ſtopped there, that was *ſhort* and *inſufficient.* If it was added (as by *Cerinthus*) that a *celeſtial* Subſtance or Spirit reſted ſometimes upon *Jeſus*, That was true, but ſtill *ſhort* of the whole Truth in more Reſpects than one. If it were ſaid, *conſtantly* reſiding, that was better, but ſtill very *inſufficient.* If to That were added, *perſonally united*, that came nearer up to the full Truth, but ſtill was evaſive, and ſhort. Say, *divine Subſtance perſonally* united with the Human: That comes nearer to the Point than any of the former; but ſtill there is Room for Evaſion, becauſe it might mean the *Father*; and then it amounts to *Sabellianiſm* only, and *Patri-paſſianiſm.* Add therefore, that ſuch *divine* Subſtance is *perſonally* diſtinct from the *Father* and the *Holy Spirit*, and then it is confeſſing three *real* and *divine* Perſons in one Godhead, which is the *whole* Truth. The ſeveral kinds of *Hereſies* which have affected this Scripture Truth, are but the various

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The Error which *Beryllus* unhappily ſplit upon, was the denying a *real* Diſtinction of *divine* Perſons, as I before obſerved; which in direct Conſequence made Chriſt *Jeſus* a mere *Man*, in whom the *Father* dwelt. The Biſhops of the neighbouring Sees were alarmed at the Doctrine, and met in Synod to condemn the Hereſy, and the Teacher of it. But the great *Origen* being called in to debate and clear the Point in Queſtion, *Beryllus* was made ſenſible of his Error, and being a Perſon of a pious and an humble Mind, he honeſtly retracted it[h]: And it is farther to be obſerved, that he loved his Inſtructor *Origen* ever after, and was ſincerely thankful to him[i] for affording him ſo much new Light (new to *Him*) in a Queſtion of the greateſt Importance. A rare Example of godly *Sincerity*, and true Chriſtian *Humility*. His Miſtake had ſhewn ſome Weakneſs of Judgment; but his Recovery manifeſted great Strength of Mind, and a good Command over himſelf and his own Paſſions.

A. D. 265. *Paul* of *Samoſata*.

Paul of *Samoſata*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, was of a Temper and Character very different from

[h] Euſeb. E. H. Lib. vi. c. 33.
[i] Hieronym. Eccleſ. Script. lxx. p. 138. Edit. Fabric.

what we have mentioned in the laſt Article: He gave the Churches freſh Occaſion for exerting their pious Zeal in behalf of our Lord's *Divinity*. He was impeached for Hereſy in a Council of *Antioch*, A. D. 265, and diſtinguiſhed himſelf off at that Time, and eſcaped without Cenſure; but in another Council, A. D. 270, he was again accuſed, and convicted, and thereupon depoſed. He is charged by the Council which condemned him, with reviving the Hereſy of *Artemon*, with denying his *Lord* and *God*, with diſowning any *Son of God* from Heaven, preaching up a *deteſtable Hereſy*, a *damnable Doctrine*, and the like [k]. The Sum of his Hereſy, upon comparing the beſt Accounts, appear to be this: That there is but one *real* Perſon in the Godhead, *viz.* The *Father* [l]; that the *Logos* is a mere Attribute, Quality, Power, or Operation, nothing real and ſubſtantial [m]; and that Chriſt, as it follows of Conſequence, is a mere *Man* [n]. His Scheme appears to have been, in Subſtance, little different from the *Sabellian* [o]: But the Streſs of the Charge againſt him reſted upon this, that he had denied his Lord's *Divinity*; and therefore his

[k] Euſeb. E. H. l. vii. c. xxx.

[l] Vid. *Athanaſ.* contr. Apollinar. p. 942. *Epiphan.* Hær. lxv. 1. 3.

[m] Epiphan. Hær. lxv. 1. Philaſtr. lxiv. p. 126.

[n] Euſeb. E. H. l. vii. c. 27. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. p. 223. *Auguſtin.* Hær. 44. Damaſcen. Hæreſ. lxv.

[o] See my firſt *Defence*, Q. xxiii. p. 352. *Second Def.* p. 460. alias p. 465. Dr. *Berriman*'s Hiſtorical Account, p. 144, &c.

CHAP. VI. Hereſy was called, like *Theodotus*'s and *Artemon*'s before, the *God-denying Wickedneſs* [p].

A. D. 317. *Arius.*

I cannot well conclude this View of Antiquity, with reſpect to the *Hereſies* againſt Chriſt's *Divinity*, without throwing in a Word or two about the famous *Arius*, and his Condemnation for proclaiming God the Son a *Creature*, therein denying his Lord's real and proper *Divinity*, as much as any before him. *Alexander*, then Biſhop of *Alexandria*, in his Epiſtle to the other *Alexander* of *Byzantium*, or *Conſtantinople*, (about A. D. 321) charges the *Arians* with denying their Saviour's *Divinity* [q], and with reviving the Hereſy of *Ebion*, *Artemon*, and *Paul* of *Samoſata* [r]. Not that the *Arian* Scheme was exactly the ſame with any of thoſe three (for there are Degrees of Variation from Truth, and many wrong Ways to one right) but it fell in with them all in the main Thing, and in which the principal Malignity of their Hereſies conſiſted, namely, in the rejecting the true *Godhead* of Chriſt. I ſhall ſay nothing of the Synodical Cenſures paſſed upon *Arius* and his Adherents, at the firſt opening of the Hereſy. In the Year 325, he was condemned, in more ſolemn Form, by the famous Council of *Nice*, by 318 Biſhops called from all Parts of the Chriſtian World,

[p] Ἀρειανὸς κακία, Euſeb. l. vii. c. xxix.
[q] Theodorit. Eccl. Hiſt. c. iv. p. 9. Edit. Valeſ.
[r] Theodorit. ibid. p. 14.

ſeventeen

ſeventeen only of the Number ſcrupling it for a Time, and at laſt, two only or three diſſenting. They condemn'd his Sentiments, as amounting to *Impiety*, *Madneſs*, *Blaſphemy*, ſuch as they almoſt trembled to hear[r]; which appears by the Council's Letter after his Condemnation. Their Sentence in that Cauſe carried the greater Weight in it, as the Council was *general*, called together out of *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, from all Parts of the Empire[t]; as it was upon the Matter *free*, and under no ſecular Awe or Influences; and laſtly, as is was made up of the *wiſeſt*, *worthieſt*, and every way *excellent* Prelates[u] which the Chriſtian World could then furniſh. The Determination of ſo venerable a Council gave a conſiderable Check to *Arianiſm*, and always carried great Force with it; tho' it did not ſo quaſh the Controverſy as finally to put an end to it, any more than the *Council* of the *Apoſtles* at *Jeruſalem*[x] (A. D. 49.) put an end to the Diſpute about the Neceſſity of impoſing Circumciſion[y]. But as that firſt Council had its Uſe in the Church, and very great Uſe, notwithſtanding the repeated Oppoſitions made to it, ſo had this other alſo, and has to this Day. Divine Wiſdom has appoint-

[r] Ἀταῦτα ἀναθεμάτισεν ἡ ἁγία σύνοδος, ὅσοι ὅσον ἀκοῦσαι τῆς ἀσεβοῦς δόξης, ἢ ἀπονοίας, καὶ τῶν βλασφήμων ῥημάτων ἀναχωρεῖν. Apud Socr. l. i. c. 9.

[t] Euſeb. de Vit. Conſtantin. l. iii. c. vii.

[u] Euſeb. de Vit. Conſtantin. l. iii. c. ix.

[x] Acts xv.

[y] See *Buddeus*, Eccl. Apoſt. p. 114, 294, &c.

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ed no certain *effective* Remedies for the *Perverſeneſs* of Man, but has provided *ſufficient* Means for the Inſtruction and Direction of the *humble*, and *modeſt*, and well-deſigning.

Some Perſons have ſuggeſted, that the Council of *Ariminum* (held in 359) conſiſting of 400 Biſhops or more [z], may properly be mentioned on the other ſide, as a counter Balance to the Council of *Nice:* But there is no Compariſon betwixt them, when the Circumſtances are duly conſidered. For, 1. The Council of *Rimini*, or *Ariminum*, was not *general*, being of the *Weſt* only. 2. It was not *free*, being greatly menaced, diſtreſſed, and over-awed by the Emperor *Conſtantius* [a]. 3. Out of the Number of 400, there were but 80 *Arians* [b], at the utmoſt: The other 320, or more, were really orthodox Men, induced by Artifices to ſubſcribe a Creed which they underſtood in a good Senſe [c], but which, being worded in general Terms, was capable of being perverted to a bad one. The deep Diſſimulation, at that time uſed by the *Arian* Managers, procured them the Advantage only of a ſhort liv'd Triumph. For no ſooner did the Orthodox Side perceive how they had been im-

[z] Athanaſ. de Synod. 720, 749. Sulpic. Sever. p. 267. Socr. E. H. l. iv. c. 17.

[a] Athanaſ. ad Afros, 892, 893. Socrat. E. H. l. 2. c. 37. Sozom. l. iv. c. 19. Hilar. Pict. v. 1242. Ed. Bened.

[b] Ariani non amplius quam octoginta: Reliqui noſtrarum Partium erant. Sulpic. Sever. l. ii. c. 56.

[c] Sonabant verba Pietatem, et inter tanta mella præconii, nemo venenum inſertum putabat. *Hieron. contr. Lucifer.*

poſed

poſed upon, and what Uſe was to be made of it, but they declared to the World their own good Meaning, and the Perfidiouſneſs of the oppoſite Party. But of This I have treated more largely elſewhere [d]. It was of That Time that St. *Jerome* ſpeaks, when he pleaſantly ſays, that the *whole* Chriſtian *World groaned* (*viz.* under the Slander thrown upon them by their Adverſaries) and *wondred to ſee it ſelf become all over Arian* [e]: That is to ſay, they wondred at the Aſſurance of the *Arians*, in ſo impoſing upon the Catholicks, and in *repreſenting them to be* the very Reverſe of what they were [f]. The learned Mr. *Bingham* underſtood theſe Matters well, and has expreſſed them juſtly, and fully in theſe few Lines [g]. "The *Arians* put an equivocal and poiſonous "Senſe upon them *(the Words of the Council)* "giving out, after the Council was ended, "that they had not only aboliſhed the Word "*Conſubſtantial*, but with it condemned the "*Nicene Faith* alſo: Which was ſtrange ſur-"prizing News to the Biſhops that had been "at *Ariminum*. Then ſays St. *Jerome*, *Inge-*"*muit totus Orbis, et Arianum ſe eſſe miratus*

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[d] Defenſe Q. xxix. p. 468, 469. Anſwer to *Whitby*, p. 19. Compare *Berriman*'s Hiſtor. Account, p. 228, &c.

[e] Ingemuit totus Orbis, et *Arianum* ſe eſſe miratus eſt. *Hieronym.* contr. *Lucifer.* p. 300.

[f] Concurrebant Epiſcopi, qui *Ariminenſibus* dolis irretiti, *ſine conſcientia* Hæretici ferebantur, conteſtantes Corpus Domini, et quicquid in Eccleſia Sanctum eſt, ſe nihil mali in ſua Fide ſuſpicatos. *Hieron.* ibid. 301.

[g] *Bingham*'s Antiquities, B. vi. Ch. 3. ſ. 10. Compare Dr. *Berriman*, Hiſt. Acc. p. 228, &c.

eſt:

" *eſt: The whole World groaned, and was*
" *amazed to think ſhe ſhould be reputed Arian.*
" That is, the Catholick Biſhops of the whole
" World (for there were 300 [h] of them pre-
" ſent at the Council) were amazed to find
" themſelves ſo abuſed, and repreſented as
" *Arian*, when they never intended in the
" leaſt to confirm the *Arian* Doctrine." But as to the Extent of the *Nicene Faith*, both at that Time, and after, I have ſpoken more particularly of it in another Place [i], and need not here repeat. Only, the Reader may permit me to ſum up the whole in the ſame Words, or nearly as before. " There never
" was a Council on the *Arian* Side ſo *free*, ſo
" *large*, ſo in every reſpect *unexceptionable* as
" the Council of *Nice* was: But whatever
" Oppoſition was made to it, was carried on
" with ſuch Wiles and Subtilties and refined
" Artifices, (to ſay nothing of *Cruelties*) as
" every honeſt Man would be aſhamed of:
" And notwithſtanding all that the *Arians*
" could do, they were not able long to main-

[h] He might have ſaid, 320. But I believe, *Jerome* meant more than that 320 by the *totus Orbis:* He meant all the *Orthodox*; for all of them ſuffered in the Slander raiſed againſt their Brethren, moſt of them as Orthodox as Themſelves: So it affected them all, and all were amazed at the *injurious* Aſperſion. This Place therefore of *Jerome*, rightly underſtood, is ſo far from ſaying, that the *whole World* was then *Arian*, that it is ſaying the contrary; namely, that the whole World was *Anti-arian:* For by *totus Orbis* he manifeſtly there means the *Orthodox*, who had been ſlandered as *Arian*, and were really *Anti-arian*. They were the *whole World* in his Account, the *Arians* being but few in Compariſon.

[i] Defence. Q. xxix. p. 468.——472.

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" tain their Ground; but the Men who ſuſtain- CHAP. VI.
" ed the Shock, and kept up the Credit of the
" *Nicene Faith*, were not only the moſt *nu-*
" *merous*, but appear to have been as *wiſe*,
" and as *judicious*, and as *pious* Men as ever
" the Church was adorned with ſince the
" Times of the Apoſtles [k].

From what hath been ſaid under the preſent Article, it is manifeſt, that the Impugners of our Lord's *Divinity* have been all along condemned as guilty of *Hereſy* for the firſt three Centuries and more; ſo that as far as the conſtant Judgment and Practice of the Church in their *Decrees* and *Cenſures*, during that Time, can be conceived to bear Weight, the Doctrine of our Lord's true and proper *Divinity*, and of Conſequence, the Doctrine of a real and coeternal *Trinity*, muſt be looked upon as a *Fundamental* of the Chriſtian Faith.

III. Beſides what has been pleaded upon the *firſt* Topick relating to *Creeds*, and upon the *ſecond* relating to *Hereticks*; there is yet a *third* Head to go upon, namely the Sentiments of *Ante-nicene Fathers*, ſuch as they have occaſionally delivered in their Writings, diſtinct from what they have reported either of *Creeds* or *Hereſies*. And theſe are what I am next going to produce, according to order of Time, to ſhew what they thought of the *Neceſſity* or *Importance* of Faith in the ever bleſ-

[k] See this *Council* defended more at large, by Dr. *Berriman* in his *Remarks* on Mr. *Chandler*, p. 19——42. And in his *Review* of the Remarks, p. 28——41.

ſed

ſed Trinity. Perhaps, I may have anticipated ſome Things under the laſt Head, which might properly have come in here; or I may chance to take ſome things in here, which might properly have come in there: But it is of no great Moment which Head they are brought under, ſo long as both center in the ſame Concluſion, and the two Parts may be conſidered as ſupplemental to each other.

107. *Ignatius.*

I begin with *Ignatius*, who writes thus: "Be not led aſide by ſtrange Doctrines, nor "by antiquated Tales, which are unprofit-"able: For if we yet live according to *Juda-"iſm*, it is as much as declaring that we have "not accepted *Grace* [l]; for the moſt holy "Prophets lived according to *Chriſt Jeſus*. "And for that Cauſe were they perſecuted, "being inſpired by his Grace, that the Un-"believers might be convinced that there is "one God who hath manifeſted himſelf by "*Jeſus Chriſt his Son*, who is his *eternal Word*, "not proceeding from *Silence* [m], who in all "Things pleaſed him that ſent him." The *Judaizing* Hereticks, (whether *Cerinthians*, or *Ebionites*, or *Gnoſticks* at large) are the Perſons here pointed at, without Diſpute [n]: And

[l] Εἰ γὰρ μέχρι νῦν κατὰ [νόμον] Ιουδαϊσμὸν ζῶμεν, ὁμολογοῦμεν χάριν μὴ εἰληφέναι. Ignat. ad Magneſ. ſ. viii.

[m] Τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ ὅς ἐστιν αὐτοῦ λόγος ἀΐδιος, οὐκ ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθών. ibid.

[n] Hæc eſt ſecunda hujus Epiſtolæ pars, quæ eos maxime præmunit contra *Hæreticos*, eos præcipue qui *Judaiſmum* introducere cona-

And the *Judaiſm* here principally charged was, their Denial of Chriſt's real and *eternal* Divinity. The *Jews* would not own a proper *Son* of *God* [o], an *eternal* ſubſiſting *Logos*, but pertinaciouſly diſputed that Point with the Chriſtians; as may appear ſufficiently, beſides other Evidences, from *Juſtin*'s celebrated Dialogue with *Trypho*. So here we may obſerve, how emphatically *Ignatius* expreſſes the Chriſtian Faith in Oppoſition to thoſe *Judaizers*, by aſſerting Chriſt to be God's *Son*, and his *eternal Word*, not proceeding from *Silence* as thoſe *Judaizers* taught. I forbear to enter into the Diſpute about σιγὴ, which has been already exhauſted by Biſhop *Pearſon*, Biſhop *Bull*, and other learned Men. What I am moſt concerned to obſerve is, that *Judaiſm* was the common and juſt Reproach thrown upon all the Impugners, or Underminers of Chriſt's *Divinity:* For that was part of the diſtinguiſhing Character of the *Chriſtian* Faith, as oppoſed to the *Jewiſh*, in thoſe Days [p]. As to *Cerinthus* and

conabantur; contra quos clare et expreſſe diſputat. Erant autem ii ea tempeſtate, qui *divinam* Chriſti naturam negabant, ut *Ebionitæ*, *Cerinthiani*, *Nazaræi*, et *Helxaitæ*. *Pearſon* Not. in loc. p. 43. Conf. Vindic. p. 55.

[o] Ιουδαῖος δὲ οὐκ ἂν ὁμολογήσαι, ὅτι προφήτης τις εἶπεν ἥξειν Θεοῦ υἱόν. Origen. contr. Celſ. l. i. p. 38.

Οὐ πάνυ τι Ιουδαῖοι λέγουσι Θεὸν ὄντα τὸν χριστὸν καταδήσεσθαι ἢ Θεοῦ υἱόν. Ibid. l. iv. p. 162.

Ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ πολλοῖς Ιουδαίοις καὶ σοφοῖς γε ἐπαγγελλομένους εἶναι συμβαλὼν, ἀδύνατα ἀκήκοα ἐπαινοῦντας τὸ, λόγον εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὃς ὁ Κέλσος εἴρηκε. Ibid. c. 2. p. 79.

[p] I ſay, *in thoſe Days*. For, that the antienter *Jews* were generally in like Sentiments, is not probable, but the contrary. Of which ſee *Allix's Judgment of the Jewiſh Church*. And *Conſidera-*

tions

CHAP. VI. and *Ebion*, the early Impugners of Chriſt's *Divinity*, it is well known that they were *Judaizers*, and brought their *Hereſy* along with them, tranſplanting it from the *Synagogue* to the *Church*. Thoſe that followed them in their Hereſy, were judged ſo far to deſert the *Chriſtian* Cauſe, and to ſide with the *Jews*. *Tertullian*, tho' directly pointing to *Praxeas*, yet makes the Charge general againſt all that deny a *real* and *divine* Trinity [q]. *Novatian* paſſes the like Cenſure upon as many as denied Chriſt's *Divinity* [r]. *Theodotus*, tho' a Gentile *Chriſtian*, is charged with *Jewiſh* Blindneſs upon the ſame Score [s]. *Paul* of *Samoſata* is obſerved to have given up Chriſt's *Divinity* in Complaiſance to *Jews* [t]. And the *Arians* afterwards, on the ſame Account, are frequently cenſured by Orthodox Chriſtians, as Revivers of *Judaiſm* [u].

I now return to *Ignatius*, who after charging thoſe Impugners of Chriſt's Divinity with

tions on Mr. Whiſton's hiſtorical Preface, p. 75, &c. And *Primitive Chriſtianity vindicated*, p. 17, &c. And *Stillingfleet* on the Trinity, c. ix. p. 203, &c.

[q] *Judaicæ* Fidei eſt res, ſic *unum* Deum credere, ut *Filium* adnumerare ei nolis, et poſt Filium Spiritum——— Pater et Filius et Spiritus *unum Deum* ſiſtunt. *Tertul.* adv. Prax. c. xxxi.

[r] Ignari et imperiti *Judæi* Hæredes ſibi *Hæreticos* iſtos reddiderunt. *Novat.* c. xv. Ed. Welchm. alias c. xxiii.

[s] Cæcitatis Judaicæ cenſors. Philaſtr. Hær. 50. Conf. Epiphan. Hær. 54. 5.

[t] Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. ii. c. 8. Athanaſ. Vol. i. p. 386. Epiphan. Hær. lxv. 2. 7. Philaſtr. Hær. lxiv.

[u] Athanaſ. de Decret. Synod. N. p. 209, 233. Orat. 2. 484. Baſil. Homil. xxiv. Tom. ii. p. 189. Edit. Bened. Greg. Nyſſen. contr. Eunom. Orat. i. p. 15.

Judaiſm, intimates their thereby forfeiting the *Grace* of the Goſpel. Then he proceeds to lay down the true Chriſtian Doctrine of a *Son of God*, an *eternal Word*, not produced in Time, or from *Silence* [a]. And ſince he aſſerts that the Denial of that Doctrine is *Judaizing*, and is renouncing the *Grace* of the Goſpel, it amounts to declaring that the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity* is an *Eſſential* of Chriſtianity. CHAP. VI.

A. D. 155. *Juſtin Martyr.*

Juſtin Martyr, in a *Fragment* produced by Dr. *Grabe*, lays a very particular Streſs upon the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity*, as the Reconciliation of God and Man is nearly concerned in it. The Paſſage runs thus: "When Man's "Nature had contracted Corruption, it was "neceſſary that He who would ſave it, ſhould "do away the Principle of Corruption. But this "could not be done without uniting *Life by* "*Nature* [or *eſſential Life*] with the Nature "ſo corrupted, to do away the Corruption, and "to immortalize the corrupt Nature ever "after. Wherefore it was meet that the "*Word* ſhould become incarnate to deliver us "from the Death of natural Corruption [b].

[a] Simpliciſſima et optima ſententia videtur, quod *Ignatius*, contra omnes veteres Hæreticos *Filii æternitatem* negantes, aſſeruerit Chriſtum non eſſe inſtar *humani Verbi* quod poſt *Silentium* prodit, ſed *Verbum* Patri *Coæternum*. *Ittigius* Hiſtor. Eccl. Sæc. 2^di^, p. 118.

[b] Φύσει δὲ τῆς φθορᾶς προσγενομένης, ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ὅτι σῶσαι βουλόμενος ἦν τὴν φθαρτοειδῆ οὐσίαν ἀφανίσαι· τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἦν ἑτέρως γενέσθαι,

CHAP. VI. Here *Juſtin* aſſerts, that it was neceſſary for *eſſential Life*, (or *Life by Nature*) to be united with human Nature, in order to *ſave* it: Which is the ſame as to ſay, that it was neceſſary for *God* to become incarnate, in order to ſave loſt Man. So *important* did he take that Article to be, conceiving that the Redemption of Mankind depended upon it. The Phraſe of *Life by Nature*, undoubtedly imports *neceſſary Exiſtence*, and proper *Divinity*, as I have obſerved and proved upon another Occaſion [c], and need not here do again. Biſhop *Bull* brings ſome other Paſſages from *Juſtin* of like Import with this: But for Brevity ſake, I chuſe to paſs them over, and am content only to refer [d].

A. D. 176. *Irenæus.*

Irenæus has ſaid much the ſame Thing with *Juſtin*, in fuller and ſtronger Words. After obſerving that the *Son of God* and *Word of the Father* became *Man*, that he might give *Salvation* to his own Creature, or Workmanſhip [e], he proceeds as follows: " Therefore,

εἰ μήτηρ ἡ κατὰ φύσιν ζωὴ προσεπλάκη τῷ τὴν φθορὰν δεξαμένῳ, ἀφιλίζησα μὲν τὴν φθορὰν, ἀθανατὸν δὲ τὸ λοιπὸν τὸ δεξάμενον διατηρῆσα. διὰ τοῦτο τὸν Λόγον ἐδήλωσεν ἐν σώματι γενέσθαι, ἵνα τοῦ θανάτου τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἡμᾶς φθορᾶς ἐλευθεράσῃ. Grab. Spicileg. Vol. ii. p. 172. Et in notis ad *Bull.* Judic. c. vii. ſ. 5. p. 344.

[c] Second Defence, p. 265. alias 270. Compare *third Defence*, p. 110.

[d] *Bull.* Judic. c. vii. ſ. 5. p. 344, 345.

[e] Bonus vere Filius Dei et patiens, *Verbum* Dei Patris, Filius Hominis factus. —— Salutem donavit plaſmati ſuo, deſtruens peccatum: eſt enim piiſſimus et miſericors Dominus, et amans Humanum genus. Iren. l. iii. c. 18. alias 20.

" as

" as I ſaid before, he united *Man* to *God*: For CHAP. VI.
" if it were not *Man* that ſhould overcome
" the Adverſary of *Man*, The Enemy would
" not have been rightly vanquiſhed; and
" again, if it were not *God* to give the *Salva-*
" *tion*, we could not be firmly poſſeſſed of it:
" Beſides, if Man had not been united to
" *God*, he could never have been Partaker of
" Incorruption. So it was meet that a *Medi-*
" *ator* between God and Man, ſhould bring
" both together into Amity and Concord by
" his own Proximity to both; that ſo he
" might preſent Man to God, and notify God
" to Men f." What we have here to obſerve is, that if *Irenæus* believed it neceſſary for *God* to become Man, in order to work Man's Salvation, he muſt of Conſequence judge the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity* (in his high Senſe of *Divinity)* an *Eſſential* of Chriſtian Faith, *neceſſary* to be believed by all to whom it ſhould be revealed, under pain of forfeiting the Benefit of it. *Irenæus*'s conſtant way of reaſoning in other places, ſhews that he always carried that Concluſion in his Mind: And indeed he goes but one Page farther on, before he formally draws it, in theſe ſtrong

f Ἤνωσεν οὖν, καθὼς προέφαμεν, τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῷ θεῷ. εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἄνθρωπος ἐνίκησεν τὸν ἀντίπαλον τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οὐκ ἂν δικαίως ἐνικήθη ὁ ἐχθρός· πάλιν τε, εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς ἐδωρήσατο τὴν σωτηρίαν, οὐκ ἂν βεβαίως ἔχομεν αὐτήν. καὶ εἰ μὴ συνηνώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ θεῷ, οὐκ ἂν ἠδυνήθη μεταλαβεῖν ἀφθαρσίας· ἔδει γὰρ τὸν μεσίτην θεοῦ τε καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἰδίᾳ τῆς ἰδίας πρὸς ἑκατέρους οἰκειότητος, εἰς φιλίαν καὶ ὁμόνοιαν τοὺς ἀμφοτέρους συναγαγεῖν, καὶ θεῷ μὲν παραστῆσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀνθρώποις δὲ γνωρίσαι τὸν θεόν. *Irenæus* ibid.

CHAP. VI. and emphatical Words [g]: " They who make " [*Jeſus*] a mere Man begotten of *Joſeph*, " remaining under the Bondage of the firſt " Diſobedience, are in a dead State, in as much " as they are not yet conjoined with the *Word* of " God the Father, nor have received *Freedom* " by the *Son:* According to what himſelf " ſays; *If the Son ſhall make you free, you* " *ſhall be free indeed* [h]. While they acknow- " ledge not him who of the Virgin is *Em-* " *manuel* [God with us] they forfeit the Bene- " fit of it, which is *Life eternal.* While they " admit not the *Word* of Incorruption, they " continue in *mortal* Fleſh, and are bound " over to *Death*, for want of receiving " the Antidote of Life." This excellent Writer has a great deal more to the ſame Purpoſe, in the ſame Chapter: But what I have cited, may ſuffice for a ſummary View of his Sentiments on this Head. It is obſervable, that according to him, the not receiving the *Emmanuel*, as *Emmanuel*, that is, as *God incarnate*, is in effect throwing up the Privileges of it, *(viz. Life eternal)* and is remaining under the Dominion of *Death* and *Hell.*

[g] Qui nude tantum Hominem eum dicunt ex *Joſeph* generatum, perſeverantes in ſervitute priſtinæ inobedientiæ, moriuntur; nondum commixti *Verbo* Dei Patris, neque per *Filium* recipientes libertatem, quemadmodum ipſe ait: *Si Filius vos manumiſerit, vere liberi eritis.* Ignorantes autem eum qui ex Virgine eſt *Emmanuel*, privantur *munere ejus*, quod eſt *vita æterna:* Non recipientes autem *Verbum* incorruptionis, perſeverant in Carne mortali; et ſunt debitores mortis, Antidotum vitæ non accipientes. *Iren.* lib. iii. c. 19. alias c. 21.

[h] John viii. 36.

Nothing

Nothing can be ſtronger for the *Importance* of the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity*; eſpecially if this Paſſage be compared with the Author's high and juſt Senſe of the Name *Emmanuel*, importing that Chriſt is *ſubſtantially*, or eſſentially, *God* in one Nature, as he is *Man* in another [i]. I know not whether I again need to take notice (having twice before done it [k]) how *Irenæus* here mixes the two Queſtions about the Birth of a *Virgin*, and about the Lord's *Divinity*, as amounting to one, upon the foot of the then preſent Controverſies. For the Point then in queſtion was, whether Chriſt was conceived in the common way of human Generation, or whether the *divine Logos* coming upon the *Virgin*, ſuperſeded and excluded *human* means? The Queſtion being ſo ſtated, the aſſerting a *divine Logos* in Chriſt, was of courſe aſſerting the Birth of a *Virgin*; as the denying the Birth of a *Virgin*, was of courſe denying any perſonal Union of the *Logos* with Man. Thus the two Queſtions, at that Time, reſolved, in a manner, into one: CHAP. VI.

[i] Diligenter igitur ſignificavit Spiritus Sanctus per ea quæ dicta ſunt, generationem ejus quæ eſt ex *Virgine*, et *Subſtantiam* quoniam *Deus* (*Emmanuel* enim nomen hoc ſignificat) et manifeſtat quoniam *Homo*, in eo quod dicit, &c. *Iren.* l. iii. c. 21, alias 26.

Ὁι τὸν ἐκ τῆς παρθένου Εμμανουὴλ κηρύττοντες, τὴν ἕνωσιν τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ πλάσμα αὐτοῦ ἐδήλουν· quoniam *Verbum* caro erit, et Filius Dei Filius hominis —— et hoc factus quod et nos, *Deus fortis eſt*, et inenarrabile habet genus. *Iren.* l. iv. c. 33, alias 66.

[k] See above, p. 304, 308.

CHAP. VI. Which is the Reaſon, as I hinted before, of their being intermingled together.

A. D. 177. *Athenagoras.*

Athenagoras, in his *Apology* for the Chriſtian Religion, written at this Time[l], has more Paſſages than one[m], which plainly prove his Belief of the *Truth* of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*: But as to the *Neceſſity*, or the *Importance* of ſuch Faith, he had the leſs Occaſion to ſpeak particularly, or to preſs it with any Earneſtneſs, ſince his immediate Concern was not with *Hereticks*, or with *Jews*, but with *Pagans* only. Nevertheleſs, he occaſionally drops ſome Expreſſions, which intimate his high Veneration for that ſublime and tremendous Doctrine, and ſhew how much it concerned Chriſtians, to make it the Subject of their moſt ſerious Thoughts, and moſt devout Meditations. Speaking of *Chriſtians*, He deſcribes them[n] "as men that made ſmall "Account of the preſent Life, but were in- "tent only upon contemplating *God*[a], and "knowing

[l] See *Moſheim* Obſervat. Sacr. c. iv.

[m] Vid. *Bull.* Defenſ. F. N. ſ. ii. c. 4. p. 67. alias 71. Dr. Biſhop's Sermons, p. 186, &c. Nourrii. Apparat. ad Bibl. Max. Vol. i. p 487, &c. My Sermons, p. 301. Second Defence, 72——78, 266, &c.

[n] Ἀνθρώποις δὲ, τὸν μὲν ἐνταῦθα ὀλίγου καὶ μικροῦ τινος ἄξιον εἶον λελογισμένοις, ὑπὸ μόνου δὲ παραπεμπόμενοι τούτου, ὃν ἴσως [forte νοήσασθαι] θεὸν καὶ τὸν πρὸ αὐτοῦ λόγον εἰδέναι, τίς ἡ τοῦ παιδὸς πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἑνότης, τίς ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν κοινωνία, τί τὸ πνεῦμα, τίς ἡ τῶν τοσούτων ἕνωσις καὶ διάτασις ἑνουμένων, τοῦ πνεύματος, τοῦ παιδὸς, τοῦ πατρός. Athenag. Legat. l. xi. p. 46. Edit. Ox.

[a] Νοήσασθαι, for ὃν ἴσως, is an Emendation of a learned Foreigner.

" knowing his *Word* who is from Him; CHAP. VI.
" what *Union* the *Son* has with the *Father*,
" what *Communion* the *Father* has with the
" *Son*; what the *Spirit* is, and what the Uni-
" on and Diſtinction are of ſuch ſo united,
" the *Spirit*, the *Son*, and the *Father*." From hence we may infer how *important* a Doctrine that of the *Trinity*, as underſtood by *Athenagoras* (the ſame as we underſtand at this Day) was conceived to be, that the then Chriſtians made it one principal Concern of their Lives, to contemplate and adore the three divine Perſons. I ſay, *Adore*: For tho' That is not expreſſed in this Paſſage, it is undoubtedly *implied*, and is the *expreſs* Doctrine of the Author in other places [b]. Thus much we may undoubtedly collect from the preſent Paſſage, that *Myſteries* of Faith were not then thought barren *Speculations*, or Matters of ſlight Concernment. The Reflection of a learned Foreigner hereupon, is very juſt and proper, and I ſhall give it the Reader in the Margin [c], as an uſeful Comment upon this Paragraph of *Athenagoras*. I proceed to other Eccleſiaſtical Writers in their Order.

reigner, *Godfr. Olearius* in his *Diſſertat. Theolog. de Spiritûs S. cum Patre et Filio Adoratione, contr. Gul. Whiſton, A. D.* 1711. p. 2. The Emendation has been taken notice of before by Dr. *Biſhop*. Sermons, p. 188.

[b] Athenag. c. x. p. 40. xxvi. p. 122.

[c] Quamquam in primis Chriſtianiſmi Temporibus id cum primis gloriæ ſibi duxerint Fidei noſtræ ſanctiſſimæ Profeſſores, quod non Meditatione Verborum, ſed Demonſtratione et Inſtitutione operum Chriſtianam rem abſolvi profiterentur; non tamen iſta

Prax'

A. D. 209. *Tertullian.*

Tertullian has ſome very remarkable Expreſſions relating to the Faith of the Church in Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, *one God*, as being the *Sum* and *Subſtance* of the Goſpel, the very Life and Spirit of the Chriſtian Religion. I have cited part of the Paſſage before, but ſhall now give it intire. "It is mere *Judaiſm*, to "believe *one God* in ſuch a Senſe as not to "reckon the *Son* to Him, and after the Son, "the *Spirit*: For wherein is the great Differ-"ence between them and us, except it be in "this Article? What is it that the Goſpel "has done, what is the Subſtance of the "New Teſtament, extending the Law and "the Prophets as far as *John*, if from thence "forwards Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, "three Perſons, are not believed to make one "God[q]?" I have taken a little Liberty in

Praxis Sacra ita fuit a *Theoria* Doctrinæ Chriſtianæ ſeparata, ut non *Myſteria* etiam *Fidei*, a quorum recta cognitione *divini Numinis cultus*, tum *vitæ* de reliquo *recte inſtituendæ* ratio penderent, non temere quidem, ſed neque tamen perfunctoriè ſcrutarentur —— Etenim qui in primis Chriſtianiſmi initiis, inque ipſo adeo φωτισμῷ ſuo, accepiſſent Fidem in *Patrem*, *Filium*, et *Spiritum S.* eaque nomina perpetuo in ore haberent, eos ſane oportebat eo contendere, ut creſcerent in omni plenitudine ſcientiæ de *Myſterio* tam auguſto tamque venerando, *Godfr. Olear.* in Diſſertat. p. 1, 2.

[q] Cæterum Judaicæ Fidei eſt res, ſic *unum Deum* credere ut *Filium* adnumerare ei nolis, et poſt Filium, *Spiritum*. Quid enim inter nos et illos, niſi differentia iſta? Quod opus Evangelii? Quæ eſt ſubſtantia novi Teſtamenti ſtatuens Legem et Prophetas uſque ad *Johannem*, ſi non exinde Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, tres crediti, unum Deum ſiſtunt? *Tertul.* adv. Prax. c. 31. p. 102. Edit. Welchm.

tranſlating,

tranſlating, juſt enough to keep the *Engliſh* up, and not to alter the Senſe. *Three Perſons* is barely a literal rendring of *Tres*, in that Place, which cannot be otherwiſe ſo well expreſſed in *Engliſh*: Beſides, the Word *Perſona*, for the ſame Thing, is common in *Tertullian*[e]. As to what concerns the *Importance* of the Doctrine of the Trinity, it is impoſſible to invent any thing fuller or ſtronger, in ſo few Words, than this Paſſage. I am ſenſible it will be pleaded in Bar to his Evidence, that he was a *Montaniſt*. The Fact is true, but there is no Argument at all in it, as has been often ſhewn by learned Men; but more particularly by the learned and judicious Mr. *Welchman*[f], in his late very correct Edition of the Treatiſe againſt *Praxeas*. *Tertullian* was no *Montaniſt* in 198: But it has been ſufficiently proved, both by Mr. *Welchman* and *Moſheim*, that his *Apology* (which contains the ſame Doctrine) was as early as that Year.

A. D. 256. *Cyprian.*

St. *Cyprian* has a remarkable Paſſage, which ſpeaks full and cloſe to our Purpoſe. Arguing for the Invalidity of *heretical* Baptiſms, He aſks, how any Perſon baptized by *Hereticks*, and thereby partaking in their Hereſy (ſo he muſt mean) can be preſumed to obtain Remiſ-

[e] Tertul. contr. Prax. c. xi. p. 32, 34. xii. 35, 37.

[f] Welchman. Præfat. ad Tertul. contr. Prax. p. 5.——13. Conf. *Moſheim*, Diſquiſ. Chronologico-Crit. de vera ætate Apologetici a *Tertulliano* conſcripti.

ſion

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ſion of Sins, and to become the *Temple of God?* " If he be thereby made the Temple of God, " I would aſk, of what God [or, *divine Perſon*] " it is? Is it of [God] the *Creator?* He could " not be ſo, if he believed not in him: Is it of " *Chriſt?* Neither can he be his Temple, " while he *denies* Chriſt to be *God.* Is it then " of the *Holy Ghoſt?* But ſince the *Three are* " *one*, how can the Holy Ghoſt have Friend- " ſhip with Him that is at Enmity with either " *Father* or *Son* [f]?" Here it is obſervable, 1. That St. *Cyprian* gives the Name or Title of *God*, to each of the divine Perſons. 2. That to deny Chriſt to be *God*, is interpretatively excluding ones ſelf from Chriſt, and declaring *Enmity* towards all the *Three*, who are *one*. 3. That therefore the acknowledging Chriſt to be *God*, is neceſſary to Salvation, and the impugning that Doctrine is deſtructive of it: Conſequently, one is a *fundamental* Article of Faith, and the other a *fundamental* Error. So far is plain. And now if there remains any room for Diſpute, it can only be about the true and full Meaning of the Word *God*, in this Place. But *Cyprian*'s declaring that Salvation depends upon the Article, is a ſtrong Preſumption that he underſtood the Word

[f] Si Peccatorum remiſſionem conſecutus eſt et ſanctificatus eſt, et *Templum Dei* factus eſt, quæro, *cujus Dei?* Si *Creatoris*, non potuit qui in eum non credidit: Si *Chriſti*, nec hujus fieri poteſt Templum, qui negat *Deum* Chriſtum: Si *Spiritûs Sancti*, cum tres unum ſint, quomodo Spiritus Sanctus placatus eſſe ei poteſt, qui aut *Patris*, aut *Filii* Inimicus eſt? *Cyprian. Ep.* 73. *ad Jubaian.* p. 203. Edit. Oxon.

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in its *juſt* and *proper* Senſe: His applying it indifferently to all the three Perſons, without any mark of Diſtinction, is a further Preſumption of the ſame Thing: His ſaying, that the *Three are one* [*unum*] one Subſtance, one Thing, makes it ſtill plainer: And laſtly, His applying the Title of *God* to the Son, in the ſtricteſt and higheſt Senſe, in other Parts of his Works, ſets it beyond diſpute [h]. I may obſerve, by the way, of *Cyprian*, as I have before hinted of other *Fathers*, that he went upon this Maxim, that whoſoever ſhall *diſbelieve* the Doctrines of *Salvation* revealed to Mankind, ſhall have no part in the Salvation ſo tendered to them, ordinarily, at leaſt.

A. D. 257. *Novatian.*

Novatian expreſſes the ſame Thought in very clear and ſtrong Terms. "If God "the Father ſaves none but through *God*, "then no one can be ſaved by God the Father, "who does not confeſs that Chriſt is *God*; *in* "*whom*, and *by whom*, the Father promiſes "to give *Salvation*: Wherefore, very juſtly, "whoſoever acknowledges him to be God, is "in the way to be *ſaved* by Chriſt who is *God*; "and whoſoever doth not acknowledge him "to be *God*, forfeits *Salvation*, becauſe he "cannot otherwiſe have it but in Chriſt as

[h] The Paſſages are collected in Biſhop *Bull*, D. F. N. Sect. ii. c. 10. p. 119, &c. And in my Defence, Q. ii. p. 29, &c. *Second Defence*, Q. ii. p. 148. alias p. 153.

"*God*,

CHAP. VI. "*God* [i]." Words too plain to need any Comment. Only, I may obſerve that *Novatian*, as well as *Cyprian*, underſtood the Word *God*, as applied to Chriſt, to import *proper* and *ſubſtantial* Divinity; as I have abundantly proved elſewhere [k]. Beſides which, it is certain, that the *Novatians*, his Followers, were always orthodox in the Article of Chriſt's *Divinity*, as alſo in the Doctrine of the whole *Trinity* [l].

A. D. 259. *Dionyſius of Rome.*

Dionyſius Biſhop of *Rome*, in a valuable Fragment, preſerved by *Athanaſius*, ſtiles the Doctrine of the Trinity, *The moſt venerable Doctrine of the Church of God* [m]; underſtanding the Doctrine as we do at this Day: It was not then looked upon as a *ſpeculative* Opinion, or as a Matter of *ſlight* Importance. But this is not all I have to obſerve from the ſame excellent Writer: He goes on to ſpeak of ſome

[i] Si non ſalvat niſi in *Deo* Pater Deus, *ſalvari* non poterit a Deo Patre quiſquam niſi confeſſus fuerit Chriſtum *Deum*, in quo, et per quem ſe repromittit Pater ſalutem daturum: ut merito, quiſquis illum agnoſcit eſſe *Deum*, ſalutem inveniat in *Deo* Chriſto; quiſquis non recognoſcit eſſe *Deum*, ſalutem perdiderit, quoniam alibi niſi in Chriſto *Deo* eam invenire non poterit. Novat. c. xii. p. 36.

[k] Firſt Defence, p. 13, &c. p. 137, &c. Second Defence, p. 61, &c. 129, &c. 150, 502, 507. 2d. Edit. Conf. *Bull.* D. F. N. Sect. ii. c. x. p. 121, 122.

[l] The Teſtimonies may be ſeen collected in a late Pamphlet, intituled, An Anſwer to Dr. *Clarke* and Mr. *Whiſton*, &c. By *H. E.* in the Preface, p. 2, 3.

[m] Το σεμνοτατον κηρυγμα της εκκλησιας τ̃ θε῀υ. Apud Athanaſ. Vol. i. p. 231.

who had the Preſumption to call the Son of God a *Creature*, led to it by their indiſcreet Oppoſition to *Sabellianiſm*, as it was natural enough for weak Men to run from one Extreme to another. He rejects the Notion with the utmoſt Abhorrence, as every wiſe and good Man would: And after cenſuring *Marcion*'s *Tritheiſtick* Doctrine as diabolical, he proceeds to ſpeak of the other, as follows: "Nor are they leſs to blame, who think the Son "*Creature*, and who ſuppoſe the Lord to "have come into Being, as if He were one "of the Things that were really made: The "ſacred Oracles aſſign him a *Generation*, "ſuitable and proper, not a *Formation* and "*Creation*. Wherefore it muſt be *Blaſphemy* "of no ordinary Size, but of the firſt Magnitude, to ſay that the Lord was a kind of "Handy-work. For if He began to be, He "once was not: But He exiſted eternally, if "ſo be that He is *in the Father*, as himſelf "teſtifies, and if Chriſt be the *Word*, and "*Wiſdom*, and *Power* [n]." There is more to the ſame Purpoſe in what follows: What I have cited may ſuffice to ſhew, that the Doctrine of our Lord's coeternal *Divinity* was

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[n] Οὐ μεῖον δ' ἄν τις καταμέμφοιτο καὶ τὴς πολιρκα τὸν υἱὸν εἶναι δοξάζοντας, καὶ γεγενῆσθαι τὸν κύριον, ὥσπερ εἴ τι ὄντως γενομένων, νομίζοντας, τῶν θείων λογίων γένησιν αὐτῷ τὴν ἁρμόττουσαν καὶ πρέπουσαν, ἀλλ' ἐχὶ πλάσιν τινὰ καὶ ποίησιν προσμαρτυρόντων. Βλάσφημον οὖν ὑ τὸ τυχὸν, μέγιστον μὲν οὖν, χειροπόητον τρόπον τινὰ λέγειν τὸν κύριον. εἰ γὰρ γέγονεν υἱὸς, ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν· ἀεὶ δὲ ἦν, εἰγε ἐν τῷ πατρί ἐστιν, ὡς αὐτὸς φησι, καὶ ὁ λόγος, καὶ σοφία καὶ δύναμις χριστός. Apud Athanaſ. Vol. i. p. 231, 232.

then

CHAP. VI. then looked upon as an Article of the higheſt *Importance*, and that to deny it was to *blaſpheme* in a moſt grievous manner, according to the Sentiments of the Church at that Time. For *Dionyſius* ſpeaks not his own Senſe only, but the Senſe of the *Roman* Synod, and of good Chriſtians in general; as he himſelf intimates by his ſaying to thoſe whom he addreſſes himſelf to, that he had no need to dwell upon that Matter before Perſons ſo enlightened by the Spirit of God, and ſo well apprized, as they were, of the great *Abſurdity* of making the Son a Creature [o].

A. D. 259. *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria.*

The Caſe of *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* is a famous Caſe. He had written ſome Things againſt the *Sabellians*, wherein expreſſing himſelf unwarily, he was ſuſpected by ſome to lean too far towards the oppoſite Extreme, as if he had not juſt Notions of the *Divinity* of Chriſt. A jealouſy being raiſed, the Matter was thought conſiderable enough to be brought before the other *Dionyſius*, Biſhop of *Rome*: Which, probably, occaſioned his writing what I have juſt now cited from him [p]. The Biſhop of *Rome* took Cognizance of the Cauſe, and the Biſhop of *Alexandria*, tho' not infe-

[o] Καὶ τὶ ἂν ἐπὶ πλέον περὶ τούτων πρὸς ὑμᾶς διαλεγοίμην, πρὸς ἄνδρας πνευματοφόρους, καὶ σαφῶς ἐπιγαμένους τὰς αἱρέσεις τὰς ἐν τῷ ποιήματι λέγειν τὸν υἱὸν ἀνακυπτούσας; ibid. p. 232.

[p] See Athanaſ. de Sententia Dionyſii Alex. p. 252. de Synod. 757.

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rior to him, nor under his Juriſdiction, ſubmitted ſo far as to put in his Anſwer, or *Apology*: Which alone ſhews, that it was looked upon by all Parties, as a Cauſe of great Moment; for in ſmaller Matters, Biſhops were not obliged to give Account to their Collegues. St. *Cyprian* well expreſſes both the Caſes, *viz.* where and when independent Biſhops were accountable to other Biſhops [q], and where they were not [r]. The Sum is, that in the *ritual* part of Religion, ſuch Biſhops were independent, and unaccountable; but in the *ſubſtantial* part, in Matters of *neceſſary* Faith, they were liable to be cenſured by their Brethren. Seeing therefore that *Dionyſius* of *Alexandria* was accuſed in a Cauſe of *Hereſy*, the Biſhop of *Rome* could not decline hearing it, nor the other refuſe to ſubmit to have it heard, and judged. The whole Proceſs of that Affair ſhews that the *Divinity* of Chriſt (about

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[q] Copioſum Corpus eſt Sacerdotum, concordiæ mutuæ glutino atque unitatis vinculo copulatum, ut ſi quis ex collegio noſtro *Hæreſin* facere, et gregem Chriſti lacerare et vaſtare tentaverit, ſubveniant cæteri, et quaſi Paſtores utiles et miſericordes, oves dominicas in gregem colligant. *Cyprian.* ad Steph. Ep. 68. p. 178.

[r] Supereſt ut de hac ipſa re, ſinguli quid ſentiamus, proferamus; neminem judicantes, aut a jure Communionis aliquem, ſi diverſum ſenſerit, amoventes. Neque enim quiſquam noſtrum Epiſcopum ſe Epiſcoporum conſtituit, aut Tyrannico terrore ad obſequendi neceſſitatem collegas ſuos adigit; quando habeat omnis Epiſcopus pro licentia libertatis et poteſtatis ſuæ arbitrium proprium; tamque judicari ab alio non poteſt, quam nec ipſe poteſt judicare: Sed expectemus univerſi judicium Domini noſtri Jeſu Chriſti, qui unus et ſolus habet poteſtatem et præponendi nos in Eccleſiæ ſuæ gubernatione, et de actu noſtro judicandi. *Concil.* Carthagin. apud Cyp. p. 229, 230.

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A. D. 319. *Alexander* of *Alexandria*.

I ſhall cloſe this Account with the Sentiments of *Alexander* and his Clergy, among which were near a hundred more Biſhops of the

[s] Athanaſ. de Sententia Dionyſ. p. 252. de Synod. 757, 758.

[t] See the whole Thing more particularly drawn out, and vindicated from Exceptions, in *Bull*, Def. F. N. Sect. ii. c. xi. *Thirlby*'s Anſwers to *Whiſton*'s Suſpicions, p. 31, &c. *Berriman*, Hiſt. Account, p. 127, &c.

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Province, upon the preſent Queſtion, at the firſt breaking out of the *Arian* Hereſy. In their ſynodical Letter, after Sentence of Excommunication paſſed upon *Arius* and his Adherents, They repreſent the *Arians*, or *Euſebians*, as fallen into an *Apoſtaſy*, and as Forerunners of *Antichriſt*[a]: They compare them with *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*, and the Traytor *Judas*; and they ſtigmatize Them as Enemies to God, and Subverters of Souls. Such was their Senſe of the high Importance of the Doctrine of Chriſt's *Divinity*, which *Arius* had impugned. About two Years after, the ſame *Alexander*, in his circular Letter to the other *Alexander* of *Byzantium*, after declaring his Faith in Chriſt, as truly and eſſentially *God*, of that and other Articles of his Creed, He ſays: "Theſe we teach, and Theſe we declare: "Theſe are the Apoſtolical Doctrines of the "Church, for which we ſhould be content "to die, making ſmall Account of them who "would compel us to deny them: For tho' "they ſhould even torture us to comply, yet "would we not caſt off our Hope in thoſe "[*Doctrines*]: For the oppoſing of which "*Arius* and *Achillas*, with their Accomplices, being Enemies to the Truth, are "ejected out of the Church, as Deſerters "of our holy Faith [*godly Doctrine*]; purſuant to St. *Paul*'s Rule: If any one

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[a] Ἀνδρὶς παράνομοι καὶ χριτομάχοι, διδάσκοντες Αποστασίαν, ἣν εἰκότως ἄν τις πρόδρομον τῦ Αντιχρίςυ ὑποτάττειν καὶ καλίσειεν. Ap. Athanaſ. p. 397. et Ap. Socrat. l. i c. 6.

" *preach any other Goſpel unto you* than what " you have received, *let him be accurſed*, tho' " He ſhould pretend to be an *Angel from Hea-* " *ven*[b]." Such were the Sentiments of This good and great Man, relating to the *Importance* of the Doctrine he taught; the ſame which was afterward confirmed by the General Council of *Nice*, ſummoned from out of all Chriſtendom to decideſo *momentous* a Queſtion.

The Sum of what I have advanced in this Chapter, is, that by three ſeveral Topicks it is proved to be certain *Fact*, that the Doctrine of our Lord's *Divinity*, and ſo of the whole Trinity, was looked upon by the antient Churches of Chriſt, as one of the *prime* Verities, one of the *Eſſentials* of Chriſtianity. This, I ſay, is proved from *Creeds*, and from *Cenſures* upon *Hereſies*, (*publick* Acts of the Church) and from particular Teſtimonies of *Fathers*, declaring their own private Sentiments of the *Weight* and *Importance* of the Doctrines we have been conſidering. Now, I proceed to enquire of what *Uſe* and *Value* This View of the *Antients* may be to us.

[b] Ταῦτα διδάσκομεν, ταῦτα κηρύττομεν· ταῦτα τῆς ἐκκλησίας τὰ Ἀποστολικὰ δόγματα, ὑπὲρ ὧν καὶ ἀποθνήσκομεν, τῶν ἐξομνυσθαι αὐτὰ διαζωρίνων ἧττον προθυμότερος, εἰ καὶ διὰ βασάνων ἀναγκάζοιτο, τὴν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐλπίδα μὴ ἀπορριπτόμενος, ἣν ἐμπέποιται κ. τ. λ. Apud Theodorit. E. H. l. i. c. 4.

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Shewing the Uſe *and* Value *of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity with Reſpect to Controverſies of Faith.*

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I intend not here to conſider *the Uſe of the Fathers* in its largeſt Extent, but only ſo far as concerns *Articles* of *Faith*. I ſhall endeavour to ſet this Matter in as clear a Light as I can, for the impartial and diſcerning Reader to judge of, avoiding all *Extremes*. A certain Writer, whom I ſhould not perhaps have taken the leaſt notice of, had it not thus fallen in my Way, has been pleaſed to tell the World; that " Dr. *Waterland* and ſome " others, who have appeared on the ſame " Side of the Queſtion, have only conſidered " the Scripture in that Light which a ſober " *Turk* or an *Indian* might diſcover in it. " But Scripture has a much greater Force in " the Hands of St. *Athanaſius*, and of St. *Baſil*, " (who viewed it in its true, that is, in its *ori-* " *ginal* and *traditionary* Senſe, and under the " Lights of *Faith*) than it has in Dr. *Water-* " *land*'s; who aſcends no higher than the " bare *Letter*, and that Senſe of which all " Men, who are ſincere, may equally judge, " whether they believe it or not. But when " St. *Athanaſius* and St. *Baſil* argue from " Scripture, they have a Regard to *Faith*, " and thoſe Ideas which *Catholicks* have al-

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" ways had concerning the Son, and the Holy " Spirit [c]." The Report which this Gentleman has here made, may be true in part: And, ſo far, what he intended as an Article of Blame, may appear much otherwiſe to more equal Judges. I doubt not to ſay, that the Scripture is plain enough in this Cauſe, for any honeſt *Turk* or *Indian* to judge of, who is but able to diſcern the Difference between *wreſting* a Text, and giving it an *eaſy* and *natural* Interpretation. Nor do I ſee, why a Man may not be as *certain* of the Conſtruction of Scripture, in this Article, from the Words themſelves, comparing Scriptures with Scriptures, as he may be of the Senſe of *Homer* or *Ariſtotle*, of *Cicero* or *Cæſar*, in plain and clear Paſſages. Nevertheleſs, if over and above This, any further *Light* or *Strength* may ariſe from comparing *Scripture* and *Antiquity* together, it is an additional Advantage to our Cauſe, ſuch as we are thankful for, and conſtantly make uſe of. All kinds of Evidences are *uſeful*; and there is ſo much Weakneſs generally in Mankind, that we have no Reaſon to throw aſide any Aſſiſtances given us for Relief or Remedy. *Antiquity* therefore, ſuperadded to Scripture, is what we ſincerely value, and pay a great Regard to; perhaps much greater than that Gentleman him-

[c] An Anſwer to Dr. *Clark* and Mr. *Whiſton*, concerning the Divinity of the Son and Holy Spirit, with a ſummary Account of the chief Writers of the three firſt Ages. By H. E. printed by *Roberts* 1729. See Pref. p. 4, 5.

ſelf

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ſelf really does: For, if I be not very much miſtaken in the Drift and Tendency of his Cenſure, it is ſuch as plainly Diſcovers (notwithſtanding his artful Diſguiſes) a much more affectionate Concern for a *modern* corrupt Church, than for the pure and *antient* Faith. St. *Athanaſius* and St. *Baſil* pleaded the ſame Cauſe, and exactly in the ſame way, as we of the Church of *England* do. They appealed to *Scripture* firſt, ſpeaking for it ſelf, and proving its own Senſe to the *common Reaſon* of Mankind, according to the juſt Rules of Grammar and Criticiſm: After That, they referred alſo to the well known Faith of all the *antient* Churches, as ſuperabundantly confirming the ſame rational and natural Conſtruction. *Athanaſius* and *Baſil* were wiſe and honeſt Men, and would never have admitted what this Writer *meanly* inſinuates [d] (while he pretends to be an Advocate on the ſame Side) that *Arianiſm* would not be *Hereſy* upon the foot of *Scripture*, ſingly conſidered. Such unworthy Suggeſtions are as contrary to the general Senſe of *Antiquity*, as they are to *Truth* and *Godlineſs*, and tend only to *betray* the *beſt* of Cauſes, for the ſake of ſerving and ſupporting one of the *worſt*. *Athanaſius*'s Sentiments may appear from one ſingle Paſſage, which is all I need refer to at length in Proof of a Thing ſo well known. He obſerves, that the *Arians*,

[d] Ibid. p. 6, 7.

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finding nothing in *Scripture* to countenance their *Heresy*, were forced to have Recourse to confident Presumptions and collusive Sophistry; and when they had done with Those, their next Attempt was, to abuse the *Fathers* also [e], who favoured them as little as the Scripture did. *Athanasius* appealed to *Scripture* in the first place, and laid the main Stress there: Which indeed is his constant way in his Dispute with the *Arians*. No Man speaks more highly of the *Perfection* and *Sufficiency* of Scripture than he does: Namely, that it affords the fullest and strongest Evidences, for establishing the *Faith* against the *Arians* [f]; and that it is in it self *sufficient* for every Thing [g]. The like might be shewn of *Basil*, were it needful. Therefore let not that Gentleman hope to find shelter for his infidious Conduct, under those great and venerable Names.

He proceeds to observe, that "*Catholicks* "(*Roman Catholicks* I suppose he means) are "so accustomed to join *Faith* and reading the "holy Scripture together, that They *account* "This to be the *natural* Signification of the "Words [i]. Which is artfully insinuating,

[e] Τὸν δ' Ἀρειομανιτῶν τὴν ἀλογίαν καὶ τῶν ἐπέγων, οὐδὲν γὰρ ὑπ' αὐλογον, ὅτε πρὸς ἀπόδειξιν ἐκ τῆς θείας γραφῆς ῥητὸν ἔχουσι τῆς αἱρέσεως αὐτῶν, ἀεὶ μὲν προφάσεις ἐναισχύντους ἐπορίζοντο καὶ σοφίσματα πιθανὰ· νῦν δὲ καὶ διαβάλλειν τοὺς πατέρας ἐπεχείρησαν. Athanas. de Sent. Dionys. p. 243.

[f] Vid. Athanas. p. 274, 720, 237. Edit. Bened.

[g] Athanas. p. i.

[i] Answer to Dr. *Clarke*, &c. p. 7.

that

that the Senſe which Trinitarians affix to Scripture is not *natural*, but made to *appear* ſo, through the Prejudice of Education, or through the Lights of an *infallible* Chair. And ſo he pleads, under Cover, for *impoſing* a Senſe upon Scripture, inſtead of *taking* one from the natural Force of the Words. This never was the Advice of the *Antients* [k], neither ought it to be the Practice of *Moderns*. We inſiſt upon it, that our Interpretation of Scripture is *juſt* and *natural*, and that one great Uſe of *Antiquity* is, to guard that *natural* Conſtruction againſt *unnatural* Diſtortions. To do Violence to Scriptute, in order to bring it to ſpeak what we have a mind to, or what we have pre-conceived, is making Scripture inſignificant, and ſetting up a *new Rule of Faith:* And indeed, this Gentleman, afterwards, gives very broad Intimations, that Scripture is not the *whole* Rule of Faith [l]. So, now the Secret is out: And, I ſuppoſe, by this Time, it is manifeſt what Cauſe He is ſerving; and that He has ſomething elſe more at Heart than the Doctrine of the *Trinity*. However, to do him Juſtice, tho' he has made too many Conceſſions, and has not ſufficiently conſidered his Subject [m], He

[k] Optimus enim lector eſt, qui dictorum intelligentiam exſpectet ex dictis potius quam imponat, et retulerit magis quam attulerit; neque cogat id videri dictis contineri, quod ante lectionem præſumſerit intelligendum, *Hilar.* de *Trin.* l. i. Col. 777.

[l] Anſwer to Dr. *Clarke*, Pref. p. 17. Book 22, 23.

[m] This appears from his lame and confuſed Account of the word *Perſon*, p. 5.——11, 38.

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has yet given us a neat methodical Summary of the Doctrine of the *Antients* upon that Head. Only, it would grieve a Man to obſerved, how diſadvantagious Circumſtances He chuſes to place thoſe venerable Saints in, as overruling the *natural* Senſe of Words, and making That *Hereſy* which Scripture has not made ſo, having no Authority for doing it, but what They are forced to borrow from a particular Church [n], which gives the ſame to every Article of the *Trent Creed*. But leaving this Gentleman to take his own Way, let us now proceed to the Buſineſs in hand.

There is no Occaſion for magnifying *Antiquity* at the Expence of *Scripture*; neither is that the way to do real Honour to Either, but to expoſe Both; as it is ſacrificing their Reputation to ſerve the Ends of Novelty

[n] The very pious Mr. *Nelſon*, in a Letter to a *Popiſh Prieſt*, has ſome Reflections worth the inſerting in this Place.

"I am not ignorant, that two of your great Champions, "Cardinal *Perron* and *Petavius*, to raiſe the Authority of *Gene-*"*ral Councils*, and to make the Rule of their Faith appear more "plauſible, have *aſperſed* not only the holy *Scriptures*, as unca-"capable, by reaſon of their *Obſcurity*, to prove the *great* and "*neceſſary* Point of our Saviour's *Divinity*, but have impeached "alſo the *Fathers* of the firſt three Centuries as tardy in the ſame "Point. ——Bleſſed God! that Men ſhould be ſo fond of "*human* Inventions, as to ſacrifice to them thoſe *Pillars* of our "Faith, which are alone proper and able to ſupport it; I mean "*Scripture*, and primitive *Antiquity*. But to do Juſtice to the "Memory of ſo learned a Man as *Petavius*, the Biſhop of "*Meaux* told me, diſcourſing with him once on this Subject, that "in the laſt Edition he made of his Works, he *retracted* this "Opinion: which I am willing to believe upon the Authority "of that great Man, *&c.*" Dr. *Hickes*'s *Letters*, &c. p. 334. Compare *Chillingworth*, Preſ. Sect. 16, 17, 18.

and

and Error. *Antiquity* ought to attend as an Handmaid to Scripture, to wait upon her as her Miſtreſs, and to obſerve Her; to keep off *Intruders* from making too bold with her, and to diſcourage *Strangers* from miſrepreſenting Her. *Antiquity*, in this *miniſterial* View, is of very great Uſe; which I ſhall endeavour to ſhew as diſtinctly as may be.

But, firſt, let me premiſe a few Things, in order to give the Reader a clearer Idea of the true State of the whole Caſe. It is to be conſidered, that Scripture conſiſts of *Words*, and that Words are but *Signs*, and that *common* Uſage and Acceptation is what muſt ſettle their *Meaning*. And when any thing comes down to us in a *dead* Language, as Scripture now does, the cuſtomary Uſe of Words in that Language, at the time when they were ſpoken, or written, muſt be the Rule and Meaſure of Interpretation [o]; only, taking in with it, the Drift and Intention of the Speaker, or Writer, ſo far as it may be certainly known, or probably preſumed from Evidences, or Circumſtances.

It is next to be conſidered, that there is ſomething of *Equivocalneſs* and *Ambiguity*, for the moſt part, in *Words*, or *Phraſes*, tho' ever ſo well and wiſely choſen; and that many through *Ignorance*, or *Inattention*, or *Prepoſſeſſion* may miſtake or pervert their true Meaning. Subtle Wits may at any time take Advantage of this natural Imperfection of all Languages,

[o] See *Rogers*'s Review, p. 41.——51.

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and may wreſt the *plaineſt Expreſſions* from their true and certain Meaning, to a falſe and foreign one. The Nature of Language, I ſay, is ſuch, that it may be done, and the Depravity, or Weakneſs of Mankind, is ſuch, that it often *will* be done: And then Diſputes will ariſe about the jarring and diſſonant Interpretations, all perhaps appearing ſeverally *poſſible*, and and all *plauſibly* recommended, tho' amongſt them all there is but one which is truly *reaſonable*.

It may further be conſidered, that all Languages abound with Metaphors, Tropes, Figures, or Schemes of Speech; and it is allowable to interpret *figuratively*, *allegorically*, *emblematically*, as often as there is a *Neceſſity* for it, or good Reaſon to apprehend that the Thing was written in the way of *Figure*, *Allegory*, or *Emblem*. This allowable Liberty may eaſily be extended too far, through want of *Judgment*, or want of *Care*, or want of *Honeſty* and *Sincerity*. Indeed, moſt of the *Abuſes*, with Regard to interpreting of Scripture, when traced up to their Fountain Head, will appear to have been owing to this, that ſome will *fancy* the plain and obvious Senſe *unreaſonable*, or *abſurd*, when it really is not; and will thereupon obtrude their own *Surmiſes*, *Conjectures*, *Prejudices* upon the Word of God. For, having taken their own *Conceits* for certain *Truths*, and having determined before-hand, that the *Letter* of Scripture ſhall give way to them, they will of courſe rack

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and torture Scripture, as far as Wit, Learning, or Invention can aſſiſt them, in order to contrive ſome Conſtruction or other, which may but ſeem to favour their pre-conceived Opinions; unleſs they chuſe rather to reject or adulterate the Texts which make againſt them, or to deviſe *new* Scriptures to ſerve the Purpoſe.

Add to this, that the Art of *torturing* plain Words, has been advanced to great Perfection in theſe latter Ages, ſince the Revival of Learning and Sciences; and eſpecially ſince the *Socinians* [p] and *Romaniſts* have taken almoſt incredible Pains to make themſelves compleat Maſters in that Way. There is nothing now almoſt, but what ſome or other

[p] The *Socinian* management is thus elegantly deſcribed by *Abr. Calovius*.

Dici non poteſt quam nefario auſu, quam profana impietate, quam horrendo ſacrilegio verſentur illi Scripturarum corruptores in ſacris Literis, ut *ſuæ* aut favere videantur, aut ſaltem non adverſari *ſententiæ*: Modo enim ſcripta θεόπνευστα, partim *Novi* partim et imprimis *Veteris* Teſtamenti, de ſublimi auctoritatis *divinæ* faſtigio deturbant; modo Sententias et Periodos quaſdam Scripturæ ſacræ *in dubium revocant*; modo diſtinctiones *Parentheſium* et *Cola* intervertunt, ac *Trajectionum* novo ἐμφύτῳ Spiritus S. Senſum invertant; modo per *Apoſtrophas*, vel *Exclamationes* mentem Scripturæ corrumpunt; modo per conſtructiones *recens excogitatas*, modo per vocum ſignificationes *inuſitatas*, nulliſque Lexicographis cognitas; modo per ἀνάλυσιν violentam, modo per ἔλλειψιν prorſus inſolentem, interdum et κατὰ διάμετρον oppoſitam et contrariam, ſacras Literas detorquent: Quadrata rotundis, ſuperâ inferis, cœlum terris miſcent, horrendaque σφάλματα oracula ſanctiſſima pervertunt, deteſtanda μεταμορφώσει transformant: Quicquid denique apertum et clarum in ſacris Literis, id veluti ſepiæ rationis ſuæ obſcurant atramento. Ipſam autem Scripturam perplexitatis, ἀσαφείας, ἀσαφηνείας, ἀσαφηνίας, ambiguitatis, obſcuritatis, incertitudinis, erroris, falſitatis, impiè poſtulant et accuſant; ſcilicet juxta illud *Hieronymi* veriverbium, Hæretici convicti de perfidia, conferunt ſe ad maledicta. Vid. *Wuthrer.* vindic. adv. *Whiſton.* p. 21. A. D. 1732.

will

CHAP. VII.] will attempt (if there be Occaſion) to drag over into the Service of any Cauſe, and to wreſt to what Senſe they pleaſe, tho' ever ſo contrary to the Words themſelves, or to the known Intention of the Authors or Compilers. The antient Miſbelievers moſt of them were young Practitioners in Compariſon: For they commonly *rejected*, or *adulterated* the Scriptures which they did not like[q], not underſtanding, or however not truſting to *qualifying* Interpretations, which might ſteal away the *Senſe*, without injuring the *Letter*.

Laſtly, It ſhould be conſidered, that God has provided no other general Remedies againſt theſe and the like *Abuſes*, or againſt Men's being *impoſed* upon by them, than what he has provided againſt any other Wiles of *Satan*, or any other *Temptations*; namely, *Prayer* and *Watchfulneſs*, *Care* and *Endeavour*, and the Uſe of proper *Means*. We are no more ſecure againſt *Hereſy*, than we are againſt any other *Sins*: But there are as ſtrong Temptations to it (founded in natural *Pride*, *Vanity*, *Curioſity*, *Emulation*, *Ambition*, or ſometimes *Credulity*, *Supineneſs*, *ſecular* Intereſt, or *Revenge*) as there are to other Vices of a coarſer kind.

Theſe Things conſidered, it will be highly expedient to take in all the Helps we can procure, for the *aſcertaining* the true and full

[q] The Hereticks, ſo charged, are *Cerinthus*, *Ebion*, *Saturninus*, *Carpocrates*, *Cerdon*, *Marcion*, *Lucian*, *Appelles*, *Tatian*, *Ptolomæus*, *Theodotus*, *Artemon*, *Manichæus*; The *Ophitæ*, *Cainites*, *Sethaites*, *Alogi*, *Pepuzians*, *Severians*, and perhaps ſome others.

Meaning

Meaning of ſacred Writ, and for preſerving, ſo far as in us lies, the Doctrines of Chriſt. No proper *Means* are to be neglected or ſet aſide, leſt we fall into Error for want of the Uſe of ſuch Means, or be found guilty of deſpiſing the Gifts of God. Now we may come to the main Queſtion, whether *Antiquity* may not be juſtly reputed one of the *proper Means*, or how far it is ſo? In which Enquiry, I ſhall proceed by ſeveral Steps or Degrees, for the clearer and more diſtinct Conception of what belongs to it, under its ſeveral Views. CHAP. VII.

1. The *Antients* who lived neareſt to the *Apoſtolical* Times, are of ſome *Uſe* to us, conſidered merely as contemporary Writers, for their *Diction*, or *Phraſeology*. Any other coetaneous Writers, *Jewiſh or Pagan*, are of Uſe in that View: But Home-Writers, Chriſtian Authors, will be ſo more eſpecially, as converſant in the ſame Subjects, and breathing the ſame Spirit with the ſacred Writers themſelves [r]. This however, is the leaſt, and the loweſt Uſe of the antient *Fathers*; beſides that we have but *few*, and thoſe very *ſhort* Tracts, which bear ſo early a Date.

II. A further Uſe of the antient *Fathers* is ſeen, in their letting us into the Knowledge of antiquated *Rites* and *Cuſtoms*, upon which ſome Scripture Alluſions may be formed, and upon the Knowledge of which, the true Interpretation of ſome Scripture Phraſes or Idi-

[r] Vid. *Dodwell*, Diſſert. in *Iren.* in *Præfat.* ſ. 15. et Diſſert. 1.

oms

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ons may in ſome meaſure depend[f]. But this general Uſe is ſuch as may alſo be anſwered, in a lower Degree, by any as early Writings, *Jewiſh* or *Pagan*; as likewiſe by *Lexicons*, or Books of *Antiquities*.

III. The antient *Fathers* are further uſeful, as giving us Inſight into the *Hiſtory of the Age* in which the ſacred Books (of the *new* Teſtament, I mean) were written. For there is nothing which is apt to give ſo much Light to any Writing, as the well underſtanding and conſidering the *Hiſtorical Occaſion* of it: A much ſurer and ſafer Rule to go by, generally ſpeaking, than mere criticizing upon Words; as is manifeſt in the Caſe of *Charters*, *Statutes*, *Records*, and other ancient Monuments.

IV. I come, fourthly, to mention ſome more peculiar and eminent Views, in which the antienteſt *Fathers* may be exceeding *uſeful*, for fixing the Senſe of Scripture in controverted Texts. Thoſe that lived in, or near the Apoſtolical Times, might retain in Memory what the *Apoſtles* themſelves, or their *immediate* Succeſſors thought and ſaid upon ſuch and ſuch Points. And tho' there is no truſting, in ſuch Caſe, to *oral* Tradition diſtinct from Scripture, nor to *written*, diſagreeing with Scripture; yet *written* Accounts, conſonant to Scripture, are of uſe to *confirm* and *ſtrengthen* Scripture, and to *aſcertain* its true Meaning. *Ignatius*, for inſtance, had been

[f] *Dodwell*, Diſſert. in Iren. 1. c. 44.

inti-

intimately converſant with the *Apoſtles* [t], and was a Diſciple of St. *John* [u]: And therefore He may reaſonably be preſumed to have juſtly repreſented the Mind of the *Apoſtles*, in the Doctrine he has left behind him, extant at this Day. This the learned *Moſheim* has admitted, and even contended for [x], tho' otherwiſe no zealous Admirer of the antient *Fathers*.

The like may be ſaid of *Polycarp*, who had been taught immediately by the *Apoſtles*, and had converſed with many who had ſeen *our Lord* [y]. He was alſo particularly acquainted with St. *John* [z], was one of his *Diſciples*, and ordained Biſhop of *Smyrna* by his Hands [a]. His Doctrine, ſo far as it reaches, and may be certainly depended upon as his (whether we have it at *firſt*, or at *ſecond* hand) will be of great uſe for confirming the Senſe of Scripture, being a *ſecondary* Atteſtation of the ſame Doctrine: Which *Moſheim*, before mentioned, does alſo allow, and plead for [b]. Our moſt

[t] *Chryſoſtom.* Hom. in Ignat. Tom. i. p. 499. *Socrat. Eccl.* H. l. vi. c. 8.

[u] Act. Ignat. p. 9. Edit. Grab. in Spicileg.

[x] Si Doctrinam quam hic publice propoſuit, intelligimus, id ſimul quod *Petrus*, *Joannes*, cæteriquo ſervatoris Amici ſenſerint et *Antiochenis* tradiderint, exploratum habemus. *Moſheim* Vindic. contr. Toland. ſ. i. c. 8. *Compare* ABp. *Wake*, c. x. p. 111, 114. 2d. Edit.

[y] *Iren.* l. iii. c. 3. Euſeb. E. H. l. iv. c. 14.

[z] *Iren.* Ep. ad Florin. inter Fragment. p. 340. Euſeb. E. H. v. 20.

[a] *Hieronym.* Catal. Scriptor. Eccl. xvii.
Tertullian. Præſcript. c. xxxii.

[b] Indubitatæ itaque Fidei Teſtem rurſus habemus, non modo Doctrinæ, quam ipſe cætui ſuo tradidit, ſed et ejus quam *optimus Magiſter* diſcedens ſuis reliquit. *Moſheim* ibid. p. 237.
ABp. *Wake*'s Apoſtolical Fathers, c. x. p. 111.

reverend

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reverend Metropolitan, ſpeaking of the *Authority* of the very early Fathers, ſums it up in theſe ſeveral Particulars. "1. That they "were *contemporary* with the *Apoſtles*, and "inſtructed by them. 2. That they were "Men of an eminent *Character* in the *Church*, "and therefore ſuch as could not be ignorant "of what was taught in it. 3. They were "careful to preſerve the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt* "in its Purity, and to oppoſe ſuch as went "about to corrupt it. 4. They were Men "not only of a perfect *Piety*, but of great "*Courage* and *Conſtancy*, and therefore ſuch "as cannot be ſuſpected to have had any De-"ſign to prevaricate in this Matter. 5. They "were endued with a large Portion of the "*Holy Spirit*, and, as ſuch, could hardly err "in what they delivered as the *Goſpel* of *Chriſt*. "6. Their Writings were approved by the "*Church* in thoſe Days, which could not be "miſtaken in its Approbation of them[c]."

Mr. *Bayle* allows, that, "in the Days of "the Apoſtles, or their *firſt Diſciples*, it had "been eaſy to diſcover thoſe who gave the "Scriptures a *wrong Interpretation*, becauſe "the Infallibility of the Apoſtles (who might "have been conſulted by Word, or by Let-"ter) and the *freſh Remembrance* of the verbal "Inſtructions they had given their *Diſciples*, "and *Paſtors* whom *themſelves* had conſe-"crated, was a ready Means for clearing any

[c] ABp. *Wake*'s Apoſtolical Fathers, c. x. p. 110.

"Doubt

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"Doubt, or diſputed Point [a]." It appears then to be on all Hands agreed, that thoſe *moſt early* Fathers are competent Witneſſes of the Doctrine of the Church in their Days; nay, and of the Doctrine alſo of *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* to whom they immediately ſucceeded: And therefore their general Senſe is of ſignal Uſe (ſo far as it reaches) to aſcertain the Interpretation of Scripture, and more eſpecially as being conſonant to the *eaſy* and *natural* Import of the Words themſelves.

The like may be ſaid in Proportion, and in a lower Degree, of the Writings of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Irenæus*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* [b]; eminent Perſonages, who flouriſhed within 50, or 60, or at moſt 90 Years of the *Apoſtolical* Age. Their nearneſs to the Time, their known Fidelity, and their admirable Endowments, ordinary and extraordinary, add great Weight to their Teſtimony, or Doctrine, and make it a *probable* Rule of Interpretation in the *prime* Things: But there is another Conſideration, to follow in its Place, which will give it ſtill greater Strength of Probability than what I have here ſuggeſted. As to later *Fathers*, the Argu-

[a] *Bayle*'s Supplement to Philoſophical Commentary, p. 692.

[b] *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, the lateſt of the four, yet teſtifies of himſelf, that he had received his Doctrine from ſeveral *Diſciples* of the very chief Apoſtles, who had truly preſerved the *Tradition* of the bleſſed Doctrine as coming directly from the holy Apoſtles, *Peter*, *James*, and *Paul*. Strom. l. i. p. 322. *Conf.* Grabe. *Inſtances of Omiſſions and Defects*, &c. p. 9.

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ment, in this View, loſes its Force more and more, the lower we deſcend. Yet it deſerves our notice, that the *Fathers* of the *third* and *fourth* Centuries had the Advantage of many *written* Accounts of the Doctrine of the former Ages, which have ſince been loſt; and therefore their Teſtimonies alſo are of conſiderable Weight, and are a Mark of Direction to us, not to be ſlighted in the main Things. Neither indeed is this ſaying any thing very highly of them, but may be thought rather to be ſetting them too low, and ſinking them beneath their real Value: For, the Teſtimonies of *Jews*, *Hereticks*, or *Pagans*, ſo far as we can depend upon them, muſt be allowed to carry in them the ſame Uſe, where they teſtify any thing of the general Doctrine, or Practice of the *Chriſtian* Church, in their Times. *Pliny*, *Lucian*, *Celſus*, and *Julian* (to name no more) are all uſeful to us in this View, as they give ſome Light into the Doctrine of the firſt and pureſt Ages. They confirm the *Fact*, that ſuch Doctrines were then generally taught, and they corroborate other Evidences. *Socinus* ſeems to have allowed more to one Teſtimony of *Lucian*, than to many *Chriſtian* Evidences [c]. No doubt, but it was ſome Advantage to it in his Eſteem,

[c] Nec vero nobis quidquam hactenus legere contigit, quod trini iſtius Dei, a Chriſtianis jam tum recepti et culti, fidem facere videatur magis, quam quæ ex dialogo, qui *Philopatris* inſcribitur, et inter *Luciani* opera numeratur, ad id probandum affert *Gerebrardus*, l. 1. et 2. de Trinitate. *Socin. adv. Eutrop.* c. xv. p. 698. opp.

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that it came from a *Pagan*: Tho' ſtill it had not Weight enough to conquer his Prejudices; For, he never wanted Evaſions. But I paſs on to what I intend farther. All kinds of Evidences are of uſe, which can bring us any Light as to what the Doctrine of the Church was in the beſt and pureſt Ages: And when we are once advanced ſo far as to come to any Certainty about that *Fact*, then we have Ground whereon to ſtand, and can build our Argument upon it.

V. The next Conſideration therefore is This, that a very particular Regard is due to the *publick Acts* of the antient Church, appearing in *Creeds* made uſe of in Baptiſm, and in the *Cenſures* paſſed upon Hereticks: And the obſervable *Harmony* and *Unanimity* of the ſeveral Churches [d], in ſuch Acts, is a Circumſtance which adds irreſiſtible Force to them. It is not at all likely, that any *whole* Church of thoſe early Times ſhould vary from *Apoſtolical* Doctrine in Things of Moment: But it is, morally ſpeaking, abſurd to imagine, that

[d] Traditionem itaque Apoſtolorum in *toto Mundo* manifeſtatam in *omni Eccleſia* adeſt reſpicere omnibus qui vera volunt videre: Et habemus annumerare eos, qui ab Apoſtolis inſtituti ſunt Epiſcopi in Eccleſiis, et ſucceſſores eorum uſque ad nos, qui nihil tale docuerunt, neque cognoverunt quale ab his deliratur. *Iren.* l. iii. c. 3.

Itaque *tot* ac *tantæ* Eccleſiæ una illa ab Apoſtolis prima, ex qua omnes. Sic omnes *primæ*, et *Apoſtolicæ*, dum una omnes probant *unitatem*; dum eſt illis communicatio Pacis, et Appellatio Fraternitatis, et conteſſeratio Hoſpitalitatis: Quæ jura non alia ratio regit, quam ejuſdem ſacramenti *una* Traditio. *Tertul. Præſcript.* c. xx.

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all the Churches ſhould combine in the ſame Error, and conſpire together to corrupt the Doctrine of Chriſt [c]. This is the Argument which *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* inſiſt much upon, and triumph in, over the *Hereticks* of their Times: And it is obliquely glanced upon by *Hegeſippus* and *Clemens Alexandrinus* of the ſame *ſecond* Century, and by *Origen* alſo of the *Third*. The Argument was undoubtedly true and juſt, as it then ſtood, while there were no *Breaks* in the Succeſſion of Doctrine, but a perfect *Unanimity* of the Churches all along, in the *prime* Articles: Tho', afterwards, the Force of this Argument came to be obſcured, and almoſt loſt, by taking in Things foreign to it, and blending it with what happened in later Times. The Force of it could laſt no longer than ſuch *Unanimity* laſted. I ſay, while the Churches were all *unanimous* in the main Things (as they were in *Irenæus*'s Time, and *Tertullian*'s, and for more than a Century after) That very *Unanimity* was a preſumptive Argument, that their Faith was right, derived down to them from the *Apoſtles* themſelves. For it was highly unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that thoſe ſeveral Churches, very diſtant from each other in Place, and of different Languages, and under

[c] Ecquid veriſimile eſt, ut *tot* ac *tantæ* in *unam* Fidem erraverint? nullus inter multos eventus unus eſt. Exitus variaſſe debuerat error Doctrinæ Eccleſiarum. Ceterum, quod apud multos *unum* invenitur, non eſt erratum, ſed traditum. *Tertull.* ibid. c. xxviii.

no

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no common viſible Head, ſhould all *unite* in the ſame *Errors*, and *deviate* uniformly from their Rule at once. But that they ſhould all agree in the ſame *common Faith*, might eaſily be accounted for, as ariſing from the ſame *common Cauſe*, which could be no other but the *common Delivery* of the ſame uniform Faith and Doctrine to all the Churches by the *Apoſtles* Themſelves[f]. Such *Unanimity* could never come by *Chance*, but muſt be derived from one common Source: And therefore the *Harmony* of their Doctrine was in itſelf a pregnant Argument of the Truth of it[g]. As to the *Fact*, that the Churches were thus unanimous in all the prime Things, in thoſe Days, *Irenæus*, who was a very knowing Perſon, and who had come far *Eaſt* to ſettle in the *Weſt*, bears ample Teſtimony to it[h]. *Tertullian*, in the two Paſſages laſt cited from him, teſtifies the ſame Thing, as to the *Unanimity* of the Churches of thoſe Times in the Fundamentals of *Chriſtian* Doctrine. *Hegeſippus*, Contemporary with *Irenæus*, gives much the ſame Account of the *Succeſſion* of true Doctrine, down to his own Time, in the ſeveral

[f] See this Argument very well explained and inforced by Dr. *Sherlock* in his *preſent State of the Socinian Controverſy*, c. ii. ſ. 2. p. 60, &c.

[g] Vero ſimile ſit complures Eccleſias Originis Apoſtolicæ, regionibus linguaque diſſitas, eam Doctrinæ *concordiam* ab *uno Fonte* hauſiſſe, utpote quæ a caſu non introducta videtur. *Sam. Baſnag.* Annal. Tom. 1. 742.

[h] Iren. l. i. c. 10. alias 3. l. iii. c. 3, 4.

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Churches [i]. *Clemens* of *Alexandria* means the ſame Thing, where He recommends the Faith of the *univerſal* Church as *one*, and as more *antient* than Hereſies [k]. And *Origen* of the third Century teſtifies the ſame of the Church in his Time, and argues in the ſame manner from it [l]. *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* were both of them ſo ſtrongly perſuaded of the Certainty, firſt, of the *Fact*, and next of the *Inference* from it, that they ſcrupled not to urge it as a very full and convincing Proof of the *Apoſtolical* Faith, ſingly conſidered [m], and abſtracting from *Scripture-Proof*. An Argument which there is no need to be jealous of, if it be but rightly underſtood,

[i] Ἐν ἑκάστῃ δὲ διαδοχῇ καὶ ἐν ἑκάστῃ πόλει οὕτως ἔχει, ὡς ὁ νόμος κηρύττει, καὶ οἱ προφῆται, καὶ ὁ κύριος. Hegiſipp. ap. Euſeb. l. iv. c. 22.

[k] Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. 898, 899. Conf. *Strom.* i. p. 322.

[l] Cum multi ſint qui ſe putant ſcire quæ Chriſti ſunt, et nonnulli eorum diverſa prioribus ſentiant, ſervetur vero Eccleſiaſtica prædicatio per ſucceſſionis ordinem ab Apoſtolis tradita, et *uſque ad præſens in Eccleſiis permanens*: Illa ſola credenda eſt veritas quæ in nullo ab *Eccleſiaſtica Traditione* diſcordat. Origen. in Apolog. Pamph. inter opp. Hieron. Tom. V. p. 223.

[m] Tantæ igitur oſtenſiones cum ſint, non oportet adhuc quærere apud alios veritatem, quam facile eſt ab Eccleſia ſumere, &c.—— Quid enim, et ſi de aliqua modica quæſtione diſceptatio eſſet, nonne oporteret in antiquiſſimas recurrere Eccleſias, in quibus Apoſtoli converſati ſunt, et ab eis de præſenti Quæſtione ſumere quod certum et re liquidum eſt? Quid autem ſi neque Apoſtoli quidem *Scripturas* reliquiſſent nobis, nonne oportebat ordinem ſequi *Traditionis* quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Eccleſias? Cui Ordinationi aſſentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum eorum qui in Chriſtum credunt, ſine Charta et Atramento ſcriptam habentes per ſpiritum in cordibus ſuis ſalutem, et veterem Traditionem diligenter cuſtodientes, &c. Iren. l. iii. c. 4.

and

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and limited to ſuch Circumſtances as it was grounded upon. For the Meaning was not, that *Apoſtolical* Churches could *never* err, nor that *Tradition* would be *always* a ſafe Rule to go by: But *ſuch* Tradition as that was, which might eaſily be traced up to the *Apoſtles*, by the Help of *Writings* then extant, (as eaſily as we may now trace up the Doctrine of our Church to the Reign of *Charles*, or of *James* the firſt) ſuch a *Tradition* might be depended upon. Beſides that the *Unanimity* of the Churches all the World over (which could not be rationally accounted for on any other Suppoſition but that they had been ſo taught *from the Beginning*) confirmed the ſame Thing. The Argument in this Light, and in thoſe Circumſtances, was a very good one. But when thoſe Circumſtances came to be altered, and there had been ſeveral *Breaks* in the Succeſſion of Doctrine, and that too even in the *Apoſtolical* Churches, then there could be no arguing in the ſame preciſe way, as before: Only thus far They might argue, in after Times (upon a ſuppoſition that their Faith could be proved to be the ſame as in the former Ages) that ſince their Doctrine was ſtill that very Doctrine which the Churches held while they were *unanimous* and had admitted no *Breaks*, therefore it is ſuch as was *from the Beginning* in the Church of Chriſt. In this manner we can reaſon even at this Day, and can thereby make *Irenæus*'s or *Tertullian*'s

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Argument our own[n]; provided we have firſt proved that the Faith we contend for, is the very ſame that obtain'd in the Churches of that Age.

But before I leave this Head, I would obſerve ſomething more particularly of *Tertullian*'s manner of expreſſing himſelf in this Caſe: He did not only conceive that an Argument might be drawn from *Tradition* alone, abſtracting from *Scripture*, but he preferred that way of arguing, in Diſputes with Hereticks, as a ſhorter, eaſier, nay and ſurer Method of confuting them, than engaging with them upon the Foot of *Scripture*[o].

[n] Ad hanc itaque formam probabuntur ab illis Eccleſiis quæ, licet nullum ex Apoſtolis, vel Apoſtolicis, Auctorem ſuum proferant, ut multò poſteriores, quæ denique quotidie inſtituuntur, tamen in *eadem Fide* conſpirantes, non minus *Apoſtolicæ* deputantur pro *Conſanguinitate* Doctrinæ. *Tertul. Præſcript.* c. xxxii.

[o] Quid promovebis exercitatiſſime *Scripturarum*, cum ſi quid defenderis, negatur; ex diverſo, ſi quid negaveris defendatur: Et tu quidem nihil perdes, niſi vocem in contentione; nihil conſequeris niſi Bilem de Blaſphematione. Ille vero, ſi quis eſt, cujus cauſa in congreſſum deſcendis Scripturarum, ut eum dubitantem confirmes, ad *veritatem*, an magis ad *Hæreſes* deverget? Hoc ipſo motus, quod te videat nihil promoviſſe, æquo gradu negandi et defendendi adverſa parte, ſtatu certe pari, altercatione incertior diſcedet, neſciens quam *Hæreſin* judicet: Hæc utique et ipſi habent in nos retorquere. Neceſſe eſt enim et illos dicere, a nobis potius *adulteria Scripturarum*, et *Expoſitionum mendacia* inferri, qui proinde ſibi defendant *veritatem*. Ergo non ad *Scripturas* provocandum, nec in his conſtituendum certamen, in quibus aut *nulla*, aut *incerta* victoria eſt, aut *par incertæ*. ——Ordo rerum deſiderabat illud prius proponi, quod nunc ſolum diſputandum eſt, *Quibus* competat *Fides ipſa*, cujus ſunt Scripturæ; a *Quo*, et per *Quos*, et *Quando*, et *Quibus* ſit tradita diſciplina quâ fiunt Chriſtiani. Ubi enim apparuerit eſſe *veritatem* et diſciplinæ et Fidei Chriſtianæ, illic erit veritas *Scripturarum*, et *expoſitionum*, et omnium *Traditionum* Chriſtianarum. *Tertul. Præſcript.* c. 17, 18.

This

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This may appear, to us now, an odd way of talking: But if it be taken as he meant it, and with a View only to the then preſent Circumſtances, I believe, it will be found to turn out right. He could not mean that the Tradition of the *Senſe* of Scripture, was more *certain* than the Tradition of the *Words*, or *Books* of Scripture: Neither could he deſign to intimate that *Scripture Texts* did not themſelves afford as *certain*, or more certain Proofs of a Doctrine than *Tradition* could do, among Perſons qualified to judge in a *critical* way: Neither could He imagine, that *Scripture* ſhould not be made uſe of, or ſhould not be looked upon as the *principal* Thing, in *written* Debates againſt Hereticks; for no Man makes more, or better Uſe of Scripture in that way than himſelf does. All he ſeems to have meant was, that in *verbal* Conferences with *Hereticks*, in the Preſence of *weak* and *infirm* Chriſtians, the wiſeſt Way would be, not to engage the Adverſaries on the Foot of *Scripture*, (to bring on a Debate about the *Canon* of Scripture, and the ſtrict Meaning of *Words* or *Phraſes*, and ſo to diſcuſs the whole in a *logical* and *critical* way, tireſome to ordinary Chriſtians, and commonly *fruitleſs* [P]) but to

[P] Scripturas obtendunt, et hac ſua audacia ſtatim quoſdam movent: In ipſo vero congreſſu *firmos* quidem fatigant, *infirmos* capiunt, *medios* cum ſcrupulo dimittunt. Hunc igitur potiſſimum gradum obſtruimus, non admittendos eos ad ullam de *Scripturis* diſputationem. Si hæ ſint illæ vires eorum uti eas habere poſſint, diſpici debet cui competat *poſſeſſio* Scripturarum, ne is admittatur ad eam cui nullo modo competit. Ibid. c. 15. Conſ. c. 37.

put

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put the Iſſue of the Cauſe upon a few plain and ſhort Queſtions, ſuch as *common* Chriſtians could better judge of. It was eaſy to diſcern, what Party of Men had been Succeſſors to the *Apoſtles*, and had in conſtant Succeſſion made up the Body of the *Church*, preſerving the ſame *Faith* with great *Unanimity*. This Argument from *Tradition*, was an Argument drawn from ſenſible *Fact*, and was much more affecting, obvious, and popular, than dry Altercations about the *Authenticity* of the Books of Scripture, or the preciſe Meaning of *Words*; and it was *certain* enough, at that Time, to be depended upon: And therefore *Tertullian* recommended that Method of Debate, in ſuch *verbal* Conferences, rather than any other. Wherein to me he ſeems to have judged very well upon the prudential Caſe, and like a wiſe and a ſagacious Man [q]. Nevertheleſs, as often as he employed his Pen in Controverſy with *Hereticks*, and drew up polemical Tracts, tho' He would not omit to mention the additional Advantage he had [r] in Point of *Preſcription*, or *Tradition*, yet He choſe to paſs it off in ſhort Hints, and not to dwell upon it, but rather to reſt the Iſſue of the main Cauſe upon *Scripture*, and *Reaſon*.

A learned foreign Divine has indeed blamed *Tertullian* for his Conduct in this Affair, as

[q] See *Stillingfleet*. Anſwer to ſeveral Treatiſes. *Works*, Vol. V. p. 79, 80. *Dodwell*. Differtat. in Iren. iii. ſ. 30. p. 282, 283.

[r] Vid. *Tertullian*, contr. Marc. l. i. c. 1. 20. l. iii. c. 1. Contr. Prax. c. ii.

derogating

derogating from the Authority of Scripture, by laying ſuch Streſs upon *Tradition*. Which appears not to be a juſt Cenſure; but That learned Writer runs into the other *Extreme*, while He avers, that it is by Scripture *only*, that the *Verity*, or *Antiquity* of a Doctrine may be proved [f]. There are *Two* ways of proving the *Antiquity*, and conſequently the *Verity* of a Doctrine; namely, *Scripture* and *Church-Hiſtory*: And theſe *two* differ only in the manner of Proof, or in the *Degree* of *moral* Certainty. Can we prove, for inſtance, what were the Tenets of the *antient Hereticks*, by the Help of Church Hiſtory and Records; and cannot we as well prove what were the Tenets of *antient Chriſtians* in the ſame Way? It is true, we might more *certainly* prove what thoſe *Hereticks* held, from their own Books, if we had them; and ſo we may more certainly prove what was the Faith of the *firſt Chriſtians*, from Scripture, than from any Church Records: But ſtill the ſame Thing is *proved* both ways, and by *two* kinds of Evidences, differing only, as I ſaid, in *Degree* of Probability, or moral Certainty. And therefore the learned *Moſheim*, as I before took notice [g], ſcruples not to aſſert in broad Terms, that the *Antiquity* of the Chriſtian Faith is

[f] Huc illa referenda ſunt effata, quibus *Scripturæ ſacræ* derogare auctoritati videtur, cum tamen ea *ſola* ſit, ex qua et veritas et *Antiquitas* dogmatis cujuſdam probari queat. *Buddei Iſagog.* Vol. i. p. 997.

[g] See above, p. 367.

proved

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proved from the Writings of *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*[u]: And he allows the ſame Thing with reſpect to *Clemens Romanus*, and *Hegeſippus*[v], and *Caius*[w], and *Irenæus*[x], and, by Parity of Reaſon, to all other Church-Writers whoſe Accounts may be depended upon[y]. The admitting ſuch a *ſecondary* Proof, in this Caſe, is not *derogating* from Scripture Authority, but is *confirming* and *ſtrengthening* it in more Views than one: As it is accepting the ſame kind of Proof here, which we accept, in another Caſe, with reſpect to the *Canon* of Scripture; and as it is corroborating the Scripture Account of the Chriſtian Faith with collateral Evidences, both to illuſtrate and inforce it. Not that one would, at this time of Day, preſume to reſt an *Article* of *Faith* upon Church Records *alone*, or upon any thing beſides *Scripture*: But while the *ſuperior* Proof from ſacred Writ is the *Ground* of our Faith[z], the *ſubordinate*

[u] Moſheim Vindic. adv. Toland. c. viii. p. 221, 222, 223.
[v] Ibid. p. 218. [w] Ibid. p. 224. [x] Ibid. 238.

[y] It is obſervable of *Polycarp*, in particular, that He convinced and converted great Numbers to the true Faith, by the Strength of *Tradition*, being a ſenſible Argument, and more affecting at that time, than any Diſpute from the bare Letter of Scripture could be [ſee *Irenæus*, lib. iii. c. 3. p. 177.] It was under *Anicetus*, about the Year 145. See *Pearſon*, opp. Poſth. c. xiv, &c. *Dodwell*, c. xiii.

[z] Scripture is the *Ground of our Faith*, conſidered as the *infallible* Word of God: But then that it is really the *Word of God*, and that ſuch is the *Senſe* of this or that Text, ordinarily ſtands only upon *moral Proof*; ſo that our Faith at length reſolves into *moral* Evidence, as it is a known Rule, that the *Concluſion* follows the *weaker* of the Premiſſes, and can be no ſtronger than that

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ſubordinate Proof from Antiquity may be a good Mark of Direction for the *Interpretation* of Scripture in the *prime* Doctrines[a]. If we can prove from antient Records what That *Faith* was which obtained ſo univerſally in the ſecond Century, and later, we can then argue from it in like manner as *Irenæus*, *Hegeſippus*, *Tertullian*, yea and *Clemens* alſo and *Origen* did, and can make the like Uſe of it againſt Thoſe that *pervert* Scripture. Only, indeed, there will be this Difference, that the Argument, as now urged, is become one of the *learned* kind, and therefore not ſo well adapted to *common* Capacities as it formerly was: And it is ſomewhat *weaker* to us, in another reſpect, as we have not ſo *many* Evidences now extant, as Thoſe Writers then had, whereby to prove ſuch *conſtant* Succeſſion of Doctrine ſo long, and ſuch *Unanimity* of the Churches in profeſſing it. But notwithſtanding, we have Evidences ſufficient to perſuade

that is. But then again, it is to be conſidered, that the Strength of *moral Evidence*, in the general, reſolves at laſt into *divine* Veracity and Faithfulneſs; ſince *God* has ſo made us as to lay us under an *inevitable* Neceſſity of ſubmitting commonly to ſuch Evidence, and he cannot be ſuppoſed (without manifeſt Abſurdity, or Blaſphemy) to have thus expoſed the wiſeſt, and moſt pious, and moſt conſiderate Men to fatal and endleſs *Deluſions*. So then, in the laſt reſult, *Faith* again reſolves into, or reſts upon, the *Truth* and *Goodneſs* of God.

[a] Quoties de ſcripti ſenſu quæritur, magnam vim habere ſolet, tum *uſus ſequens*, tum *Prudentum Auctoritas*: Quod etiam in *Divinis* Scriptis ſequendum eſt. Neque enim probabile eſt, Eccleſias quæ ab Apoſtolis conſtitutæ ſunt, aut *ſubito*, aut *omnes* deficiſſe ab iis quæ Apoſtoli breviter præſcripta, ore liberalius explicaverant. *Grotius* de Jur. B. et P. l. i. c. 2. ſ. 9. p. 60.

rational

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rational Men; and the Argument is ſtill a good one [b], tho' with ſome Abatements.

VI. There is one Conſideration more, tending ſtill to ſtrengthen the former, and which muſt by no means be omitted: Namely, that the *Chariſmata*, the *extraordinary Gifts* were then frequent, viſibly reſted in and upon the *Church*, and there only. I have occaſionally hinted ſomething of this Matter before [c], ſo far as concerned *Irenæus*, and ſhall now throw in ſome additional Evidences to make good the ſame Thing. *Juſtin Martyr* is a Witneſs of the Frequency of the miraculous Operations in his Time: And he makes uſe of it, in his Diſpute with *Trypho* [d], as an unanſwerable Argument in behalf of *Chriſtianity* againſt the *Jews*; which St. *Paul* himſelf had done before him [e]. *Irenæus*, as obſerved above, made the like Uſe of it againſt *Hereticks*: And ſo does *Tertullian*, tho' in remote Hints, and ſomewhat more obſcurely [f]. Thoſe *extraordinary Gifts* continued in a good meaſure, tho' decreaſing gradually, for the three firſt Centuries at leaſt [g]. So then, beſides *oral* Tradition

[b] "This is an unanſwerable Argument, as long as we can "ſuppoſe the Tradition of the Catholick Faith, and the Communion of the Church was preſerved *entire*: Which it viſibly "was, at leaſt till the firſt *Nicene* Council. And had we no "other ways to know it, we might learn the *Faith* of the Catholick Church, by its Oppoſition to thoſe *Hereſies* which it condemned. *Sherlock pref. State of Socin. Controv.* p. 64.

[c] See above, p. 299.

[d] Juſtin Martyr. Dial. p. 308, 315. Edit. Par. alias 315, 329.

[e] Gal. iii. 2. [f] Tertullian. Præſcript. c. xxviii, xxix.

[g] Vid. *Spencer* in Notis ad Origen contr. Celſ. p. 5, &c.

Dodwell,

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tion for the Faith of the antient Churches, which was leaſt to be depended upon, or laſted but a little Time; beſides *written* Accounts which might more ſecurely be confided in; beſides the *Unanimity* of Doctrine in all the Churches, which was it ſelf an Argument that it had been *from the Beginning*; I ſay, beſides all theſe, the Teſtimony of the *Spirit* viſibly reſiding in the Church, and diſcovering it ſelf in *ſupernatural Operations*, That was a further Evidence of the *Truth* of the Doctrine then generally held. For it is by no means probable, that thoſe primitive Churches, ſo highly favoured from above, ſo plentifully enlightned and comforted by the holy Spirit of God, ſhould be permitted to fall into any *dangerous* Errors, or ſhould not preſerve, at leaſt in Points of *Importance*, the true and antient Faith derived from Chriſt and his Apoſtles. But that this Argument may appear to greater Advantage, I ſhall take leave to borrow the excellent Words of an abler Hand [b], which has ſet it forth in a very true and ſtrong Light.

" It is, I think, impoſſible, in a *moral* Senſe, " that thoſe good Men ſhould ſucceſſively " concur to impoſe upon the Church a falſe " Interpretation of *notorious* Paſſages of the ſa- " cred Writings, for the following Reaſons.

[b] *Dodwell*, Differt in Irenæum. ii. *Differt. Cyprianic.* iv. Remarks on Chriſtianity, *&c.* Part i. continued, p. 51, *&c.* Dr. *Knight*'s Preface to his eight Sermons, p. 4, 5, 6. Compare Dr. *Berriman*'s Hiſtorical Account, p. 2, 3, *&c.*

" 1. That

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" 1. That the Spirit of God was given to " the Church, to guide and inſtruct it in *ne-* " *ceſſary* Truth.

" 2. That according to the Records of thoſe " early Ages, the *extraordinary Gifts* of the " Spirit of God, continued in the Church, " were undoubted Evidences of his *Preſence* " with it.

" 3. That it cannot be ſuppoſed, while the " Spirit of God was preſent with the Church " in ſo *remarkable* a manner, and the Church " it ſelf ſo little removed from the Times of " the Apoſtles, that the *Letter* of Scripture, " eſpecially in Matters of *greateſt Concern*, " ſhould be *generally* underſtood in another " Senſe than what was agreeable to the *Spirit* " *of God*, and to that which the *Apoſtles* had " taught and delivered.

" 4. That the Doctors of the Church, " through the *Difficulty* of the Times, and " the Dangers they were expoſed to on Ac- " count of Religion, were more concerned to " prepare for the Bleſſings of another World, " by recommending *Truth* to the Conſciences " of Men, than to provide for the *Fleſh*, and " the Enjoyments of the *preſent*, by *dividing* " the Church, and *ſeducing* the Simple with " pernicious Doctrines.

" 5. That their Writings *ſuppoſe*, or *expreſsly* " affirm, that Scripture was received in an " *uniform* Senſe, in the Churches of Chriſt.

" 6. The Conſequence of which is, that " whenſoever it appears, that the Doctrine

" of the Church *ſucceſſively* agree, from the very Beginning, in an *uniform*[a] Interpretation of certain Paſſages of the ſacred Writings, relating to the *chief* and *fundamental* Articles of revealed Truths; ſuch Interpretation *ought to be received* as the *Mind of the Spirit* in the aforeſaid Paſſages: And Concluſions drawn from ſuch Expoſitions are not founded on the *Doctrines of Men*, but the *Mind of the Spirit* contained and conveyed in the Letter of Scripture. CHAP. VII.

This Reaſoning I apprehend to be juſt and ſolid, and to carry much greater Weight with it, than any the moſt ingenious Conceits, and ſurprizing Subtilties of the *Polonian* Brethren, whereby they have laboured to give ſomething of a Gloſs or Colour to their *novel* Conſtructions of the ſacred Oracles. But to be a little more diſtinct and particular, I proceed to build upon the Foundations here laid, for the more fully demonſtrating the *Uſe* of Antiquity.

VII. The leaſt that we can infer from what hath been already ſaid, is, that the Senſe of the *Antients* once known, is an uſeful *Check* upon any *new* Interpretations of Scripture affecting the *main* Doctrines. It has a *negative* Voice, if I may ſo call it, in ſuch a Caſe: And it is Reaſon ſufficient for throwing off any ſuch *novel* Expoſitions, that they croſs upon the undoubted Faith of all the antient Churches, or contain ſome Doctrine, as of

[a] Iren. l. iv. c. 35. alias 69.

Moment to be received, which the *Antients* univerſally rejected, or never admitted [b]. This *negative* way of arguing, is I think, generally allowed, and can hardly bear any Controverſy. Biſhop *Stillingfleet* obſerves to this Purpoſe, "That it is ſufficient *Preſcription* againſt any "thing which can be alledged out of Scripture, that if it appear *contrary* to the Senſe "of the Catholick Church from the Beginning, it *ought not* to be looked upon as the *true* "*Meaning* of Scripture. All this Security is "built upon this ſtrong Preſumption, that "nothing *contrary* to the *neceſſary* Articles of "Faith, ſhould be held by the Catholick "Church, whoſe very *Being* depends upon "the Belief of thoſe Articles which are *neceſſary* to Salvation [c].

The famous *Daillé*, whom no Man can ſuſpect of *Partiality* towards the *Antients*, acknowledges as much as I have here mentioned, where he ſays, "What Probability "is there that thoſe holy Doctors of former "Ages, from whoſe Hands Chriſtianity hath "been derived down unto us, ſhould be *ignorant* of any of thoſe Things, which had

[b] Sicut in legibus *humanis* valet quidem ad ſenſum indagandum, *Verborum* ac *Locutionum* cognitio, *Antecedentium* et *Conſequentium* ſeries, Conſideratio ejus quæ quoque Libro tractatur *materiæ*, ſed hæc omnia ita ſunt dirigenda, ne impingant in id quod *ab initio* publicatæ Legis de re quaque *receptum* et *judiciis* approbatum fuit; ita in Legibus *divinis* quidem, ſed humano more per *verba*, et verborum ſigna *Literas*, expreſſis, eadem Interpretationi circumdanda ſunt Repagula. *Grotius*, Rivet. Apologet. diſcuſſ. p. 685. Conf 724.

[c] Sillingfleet's rational Account. c. ii. p. 59.

"been

" been revealed and recommended by our Sa-
" viour as *important*, and *neceſſary* to Salvati-
" on?—— That They ſhould all of them have
" been *ignorant* of any Article that is *neceſſa-*
" *rily* requiſite to Salvation, is altogether im-
" poſſible: For, after this Account, they
" ſhould all have been deprived of Salvation,
" which, I ſuppoſe, every honeſt Mind would
" tremble at the Thought of [d].

Dr. *Whitby*, who was not prejudiced on the Side of the *Fathers*, ſeems to carry the Point rather farther, in theſe Words.

" In ſuch Doctrines as were rejected by the
" *univerſal* Church as *Hereſies*, *Auſtin* ſaith
" truly, that it was ſufficient Cauſe to reject
" them, becauſe *The Church held the contrary*;
" they being ſuch as did *oppoſe* her *Rule of*
" *Faith*, or *Symbol*, univerſally received; and
" that it was ſufficient to perſuade any Man,
" He *ought not to* embrace any of the Doc-
" trines of *Hereticks*, as Articles of Faith, be-
" cauſe the Church, who could not be *defi-*
" *cient* in any Point of *neceſſary Faith*, did not
" receive them. This way of arguing *nega-*
" *tively*, we therefore, with St. *Auſtin*, do
" allow: The univerſal Church knows no ſuch
" Doctrine; *Ergo*, it is no Article I am obliged
" to receive as any part of Chriſtian Faith [e]."

Thus far he at that Time: And in another Treatiſe which he publiſhed in *Latin*, 25

[d] Daillé, Uſe of the Fathers, c. vi. p. 188. Engl. Edit.
[e] *Whitly*'s Treatiſe of Tradition, A. D. 1689, Part ii. c. 12. p. 131.

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Years after, when it is certain He had no very friendly Diſpoſition towards the *Fathers*, yet ſtill he thought himſelf obliged to admit ſuch a *Negative* Argument [f] as he had before admitted. A *Negative* Argument therefore being allowed, (as indeed there is plain Reaſon for it) it muſt be allowed alſo, that the *Fathers* are of *Uſe* to us, ſo far as ſuch an Argument can be of Uſe: And that the *Antients* may be of *great Uſe* in the Church, in this View, is very apparent, being that they ſerve as an *Outwork* (which *Daillé* takes notice of) for the repelling the Preſumption of Thoſe who would forge a *new Faith* [g].

For Example, They are of Uſe, in this View, againſt the *Romaniſts*, with reſpect to the novel and ſupernumerary Articles of the *Trent-Creed*, or Creed of Pope *Pius* IV. impoſed upon the Conſciences of Men as *neceſſary* to Salvation.

The *Antients* are likewiſe of Uſe to us, under the ſame View, againſt the *Socinians*, who *innovate* in Doctrines of the higheſt *Importance*, teaching Things *contrary* to the Faith of all the primitive Churches; Things wherein Chriſtian *Worſhip* as well as *Faith*

[f] Diſtinguendum eſt inter Traditiones de rebus creditu factuque *neceſſariis*, et *non neceſſariis*. Traditionibus ad fidem moreſque *neceſſariis* Fides adhibenda eſt, utpote ſine quibus nec Fides nec Vita *Chriſtiana* eſſe poteſt: Adeo ut Argumentum *negativum* in his omnibus certiſſimum eſt; Hoc vel illud inter Fidei morumve dogmata *neceſſaria* prius locum non obtinuit, ergo nec hac ætate creditu, factuve *neceſſarium* dici poſſit; quoniam Eccleſia in *neceſſariis* nunquam deficit, *Whitby Diſſertat.* de Scriptur. Interpretatione, Præf. p. 94.

[g] Daillé, Uſe of the Fathers, p. 190.

and

and *Hope*, are very nearly and deeply concerned. It is ſufficient Reaſon for rejecting ſuch *Novelties*, and the *Interpretations* which they are founded upon, that the Chriſtian World, in the beſt and pureſt Times, either knew nothing of them, or rejected them.

The like may be ſaid with reſpect to the *Arian* Doctrines, if any Man ſhould preſume to obtrude them upon us as *Articles of Faith*. It is a ſufficient Reaſon for not receiving either *Them*, or the *Interpretations* brought to ſupport them, that the *Antients*, in the beſt and pureſt Times, either knew nothing of them, or if they did, condemned Them [h]. It has indeed been pretended, that the *Antients*, in general, ſuppoſed God the Father to be *naturally* Governour over the *Son* and *Holy Ghoſt*: But no Proof has ever been made of it, nor ever can be. On the contrary, it will appear upon a careful Inquiry, as I have particu-

[h] "In the Doctrine of the *Deity* of Chriſt, or of the *Trinity*, "tho' the Subtilty of ſuch modern Hereticks as oppoſe either of "Thoſe, may ſo far prevail on Perſons, either not of ſufficient "*Judgment*, or not ſufficiently *verſed* in the *Scriptures*, as at pre- "ſent to make them acknowledge the Places are not ſo *clear* as "They imagined them to be; yet their being always other- "wiſe interpreted by the *Catholick Church*, or the Chriſtian "Societies of *all Ages*, lays this *potent Prejudice* againſt all "ſuch Attempts, as not to believe ſuch Interpretations *true*, "till They give a juſt Account why, if the Belief of theſe Doc- "trines were not *neceſſary*, the Chriſtians of all Ages ſince the "Apoſtles Times, did ſo *unanimouſly* agree to them, that when "any began firſt to *oppoſe* them, they were declared and con- "demned for *Hereticks* for their Pains. *Stillingfleet*, rational Account, c. ii. p. 58.

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larly obſerved in another Place[1], that the *Antients* never did, never *conſiſtently* could intend any ſuch Thing; but that *Arius* and his Confederates innovated in maintaining that Doctrine, and were condemned for it immediately, upon their firſt introducing it. But it is needleſs to urge here (had not the Courſe of my Argument led to it) that *Arianiſm* was no matter of *neceſſary* Faith, in the Eſteem of the *Antients*, having proved in theſe Papers that the *contrary* to it was. Only, I was here to obſerve the *Uſe* which might be made of the *negative* Argument, ſuppoſing we could go no farther, or had nothing more to plead from *Antiquity*.

VII. I would next advance a Step farther than the mere *Negative* Argument can *directly* carry us: For, I conceive, that a juſt Inference may be drawn from that *Conceſſion*, which will extend our Views ſomewhat beyond what I have juſt now mentioned. If the *Antients* could not be univerſally *ignorant* of any *neceſſary* Doctrine, ſince it is morally abſurd that they ſhould be deficient in *Neceſſaries*; by Parity of Reaſon it muſt be allowed, that they could not generally fall into *fundamental* Errors, becauſe That alſo would be failing in *Neceſſaries*, in as much as nothing can be more *neceſſary* in our religious Concernments than to ſtand clear of all *pernicious* or *dangerous* Miſtakes. From whence it follows,

[1] Third Defence, *or* Farher Vindication. c. v. p. 108, *&c.*

that

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that whatever the *Antient* Churches univerſally admitted as a *neceſſary* Article of Faith, muſt at the loweſt, be *ſafe* Doctrine [k]. And becauſe it is hard to conceive how ſuch a Doctrine as we are now upon, could be *ſafe*, if it were not *true*, we may reaſonably infer that it is *true*, as well as ſafe. Thus far I have been purſuing the Conſequences which appear to follow from the *Conceſſion* made by *Daillé* and others.

But I apprehend withal, that the ſame Concluſion will more directly and cloſely follow from the Principles before laid down; namely, that morally ſpeaking, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that the primitive Churches ſhould ſo *univerſally* maintain one and the ſame Doctrine, if they had not received it from the Beginning; eſpecially conſidering the *Important* Nature of the Doctrine, and how *near* they lived to the Apoſtolical Age, and how remarkably they were bleſſed, all the Time, with plentiful Effuſions of God's *holy Spirit*. Theſe Conſiderations taken together, do afford, as I conceive, a *poſitive* Argument to prove that what the Antients ſo held as *true* and *important* (Scripture alſo, in its eaſy and moſt natural Senſe, countenancing the ſame) ought

[k] Hic vero ex conceſſis *Dallæanis* recte concluditur, et nullum Articulum *neceſſarium* eos ignoraſſe; et e fortiore, nulla execrabili Hæreſi implicitos, nobis errandi duces extitiſſe. ——— Minime eſt probabile (judice ipſo *Dallæo*) vel unicum Fidei membrum eos *latuiſſe*, et multo incredibilius, prolapſos fuiſſe in errorem *pernicioſum*, ſeu Hæreſim ſanæ Fidei contrariam. *Scrivenar. contr. Dal.* p. 222, 223.

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to be received by us as *Scripture Doctrine*[l], and valued accordingly. Any other pretended Senſe of Scripture, as implying a kind of *moral* Abſurdity, ought to be rejected; unleſs it can be proved to carry with it ſuch a Degree of *moral Certainty* as is more than ſufficient to countervail ſuch *Preſcription* or *Prejudice* againſt it. But now as to the *Arian* or *Socinian* Interpretations, in this Caſe, they carry no *moral Certainty* at all, to counterpoiſe the *moral Abſurdity* which ſtands againſt them: Therefore the Judgment of the univerſal Church (were there nothing elſe) ought to overrule their Interpretations. For it was morally impoſſible that the primitive Churches ſhould err, in Doctrines of that high Importance, ſo ſoon, or ſo univerſally[m]: But it is not morally impoſſible, nor at all unlikely, that thoſe later Gentlemen ſhould miſtake in commenting upon ſacred Writ.

[l] Cum majorem *omnibus* quam *ſingulis* Chriſtianis, et *univerſæ* quam *particularibus* quibuſcunque Eccleſiis fidem habendam eſſe nemo dubitet; cum plurima etiam ſint in quæ *univerſalis Eccleſia* per multa poſt Apoſtolos ſecula conſenſit; cum hæc denique univerſalis Eccleſiæ conſenſio *certiſſima* ſit, in iis quibus habeatur capitibus, ſacræ Scripturæ *Interpretatio*; hinc clariſſime conſtat, quali quantoque *uſui* ſint *Antiqui Patres*, aliique omnium Eccleſiæ ſeculorum Scriptores, quamque neceſſario ab iis conſulendi ſint, quibus Eccleſiaſticas agitantibus controverſias vel ſua ſalus, vel Pax Eccleſiæ cordi eſt.—Quicquid de aliis dicendum eſt, ea ſaltem in quæ *omnes ubique Eccleſiæ* conſenſerunt, non poſſunt non certiſſima eſſe, et neceſſario ab omnibus etiamnum retinenda. *Beveregii* Cod. Can. vindicat. in Procem. ſ. iii.

[m] Conſtat proinde omnem Doctrinam quæ cum illis Eccleſiis Apoſtolicis, matricibus et originalibus Fidei conſpiret, veritati deputandam, ſine dubio tenentem quod Eccleſiæ ab Apoſtolis, Apoſtoli a Chriſto, Chriſtus a Deo accepit. *Tertul. Præſcript.* c. xxi.

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The Sum then of the whole Caſe, in few Words, is this: 1. We aſſert, that the received Doctrine of the Trinity is proved directly to be *true*, and conſequentially to be *important*, from *Scripture* it ſelf, according to the known Rules of Grammar and Criticiſm: And ſuch Proof cannot be evaded, or eluded, without doing the greateſt *Violence* imaginable to the Texts, 2. In the next Place, we maintain, that the *antient* Churches taught the ſame Doctrine as an *Eſſential*, and condemned the contrary Opinions as *pernicious* and *dangerous*: Which Conſideration makes it now *doubly* abſurd to interpret Scripture in Contradiction to That Doctrine [n]. 3. The Reſult of the two foregoing Conſiderations, is, that ſince we have thus proved the *Truth* of our Doctrine, and the *Importance* of it, both ways (directly from *Scripture*, and indirectly from the *Antients*) I ſay, the Reſult is, that This is the Faith which we ought to con-

[n] "The unanimous Conſent of ſo many diſtinct viſible "Churches, as exhibited their ſeveral *Confeſſions*, *Catechiſms*, or "*Teſtimonies* of their own or Forefathers Faith unto the Council "of *Nice*, was an Argument of the ſame Force and Efficacy "againſt *Arius* and his Partakers, as the general Conſent and "Practice of all Nations, in worſhipping a divine Power in "all Ages, is againſt *Atheiſts*. Nothing but the *ingrafted Na-* "*tion* of a *Deity* could have induced ſo many ſeveral Nations, "ſo much different in natural Diſpoſitions, in civil Diſcipline "and Education, to affect or practiſe the Duty of Adoration: "And nothing but the *ingrafted Word* (as St. *James* calls the "Goſpel) delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the holy Scrip- "tures, could have kept ſo many ſeveral Churches as communi- "cated their *Confeſſions* unto that Council, in the Unity of the "ſame Faith. Biſhop *Patrick*, Diſcourſe about Tradition, p. 21. Printed A. D. 1683.

tend

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tend for: We are *morally* certain every way, that it is *true*, and if true, *important* of courſe. And ſince we have ſuch *moral* Certainty as Things of this Nature can be conceived to admit of, and ſuch as God has obliged us to ſubmit to and follow in other like Caſes, it is therefore *infallibly* certain (that I may once more copy after the great *Chillingworth*) that, in *true Wiſdom and Prudence*, we ought to accept this Doctrine as *revealed* by God, and to maintain it with a conſcientious Care and Zeal; and conſequently, to decline Communion with all ſuch as openly impugn it.

Here I thought to have concluded this Chapter, having offered what appeared ſufficient for ſupporting or illuſtrating the *Uſe* and *Value* of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity: But I conſidered, that ſome perhaps might think it an Omiſſion, if I ſhould take no notice of ſundry *Objections* which have been frequently urged againſt the *Uſe* of *Antiquity*, particularly in Controverſies of Faith. Now, tho' I apprehend that a clear and juſt ſtating of the Caſe (which is what I have been labouring) is the beſt way of removing Objections, as it is leaving them no Foundation to ſtand upon, or none conſiderable; yet rather than be thought wanting in any reſpect to a very important Subject, I ſhall endeavour to return particular Anſwers to the moſt noted Objections which have fallen within my Obſervation. The doing it may help to illuſtrate the Subject; as it is conſidering it under various Views, turned

and tried every way: And ſometimes juſt Anſwers to Objections have the Force almoſt of *new Proofs*, for confirming the Poſitions before aſſerted. I incline the more to it, becauſe great Pains have been taken by many to depreciate the Value of *Antiquity*, and to throw Contempt upon the primitive *Fathers*: Which is a very unjuſtifiable Practice, and is wounding *Chriſtianity* it ſelf through their ſides; tho' ſome that have done it, might be far from intending it. But I proceed to Particulars. CHAP. VII.

I. It has been ſometimes pleaded, that the *Scriptures* are in themſelves a *perfect* Rule of Faith: What need therefore can there be of *Fathers*, with reſpect to the *fundamental* Articles [t]? To which we anſwer, that we produce not *Fathers* to ſuperadd *new* Doctrines to Scripture, but only to ſecure the *Old*; not to *compleat* the Rule, but more ſtrongly to aſſert and maintain both its *true* Senſe, and *whole* Senſe. The more *perfect* the Rule is, the more Care and Circumſpection it demands, that we may preſerve it intire, both as to *Words*, and *Meaning*. For if either of them happens to be ſtollen away, or wreſted from us, Scripture ſo maimed or caſtrated is no longer That *perfect Rule* which Chriſt has ordained. It is much to be ſuſpected, that many pretend a Zeal for *Scripture*, who mean nothing by it, but to have its *Fences*

[t] *Whitby* Diſſertat. de Scriptur. Interpret. in Præfat. p. 8, 9.

taken

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taken down, that they may deal the more freely, or rudely with it. They would exclude the *Antients*, to make room for *themselves*, and throw a kind of Slight upon the *received* Interpretations, only to advance their *own*. Such commonly has been the way, and therefore there is the less Regard to be paid to magnificent Words. They complain sometimes, that interpreting Scripture by the *Antients*, is debasing its Majesty, and throwing *Christ* out of his *Throne* [p]. But we think, that Christ never sits more secure or easy in his Throne, than when he has his most faithful *Guards* about him; and that none are so likely to strike at his *Authority*, or to aim at *dethroning* him, as They that would displace his *old Servants*, only to make way for *new* ones; who may either obtrude themselves without Call, or may be unfurnished for the Employ, or not well affected to his Person and Government. But to speak out of Figure, and to come closer to the Business, the *Perfection* of Scripture is a Point allowed, and is no Part of the Question between us: The main Question is, how we may be most secure of reaping the full *Benefits* of That Perfection, whether with the Light *Antiquity* before us, or without it? We know, how *Faustus Socinus*, under colour of extolling the *Perfection* of Scripture, studied nothing so much as to blazon the *Perfection* of his own Parts, and Abilities, desert-

[p] Whitby, Ibid. p. 9.

ing

ing the *Antients*, and truſting only to *himſelf* and his Uncle *Lælius*[q]. He preſumed to ſet up his own fond *Conceits* as the *Meaſure* of all Truth: Which, in Effect, was advancing a *new Rule of Faith*, and forcing Scripture to a compliance with it; preferring the Rovings of his own Imagination before the Wiſdom of *Heaven*. It might be ſhewn on the other Hand, that thoſe who have leaſt indulged their own Fancies, but have adhered ſtrictly to *Antiquity*, in the prime Things, have done moſt Honour to the *Perfection* of *Scripture*, and have kept the Rule of Faith intire: This therefore is the way, rather than the other. CHAP. VII.

I may add, that when we ſay that Scripture is *perfect*, we mean, generally, as to the *Matter* of it, which is *full* and *compleat* to be a Rule of Life and Manners, without taking in any *additional* Rule to join with it. But if we ſpeak of Scripture being *perfect* in regard to *Words*, or *Style*, we can mean only, that it is as perfect as *Words* can be, and Words (to us now) of a *dead* Language. Whatever *Imperfection* neceſſarily goes along with *all Languages*, muſt of courſe go along with *Scripture-Language*; which tho' dictated from Hea-

[q] Neminem enim ego in iis rebus de quibus in Reſponſione illa mea diſſeritur, ex iis qui hodie vivunt, ulla ex parte Magiſtrum agnoſco; ſed Deum tantummodo præceptorem habui ſacraſque Literas. Quinetiam in univerſa ipſa divinarum rerum ſcientia, quæcunque tandem illa in me ſit, præter unum *Lælium*, patruum meum, qui jam diu mortuus eſt, vel potius præter quædam paucula ab ipſo conſcripta, et multa annotata, nullum prorſus Magiſtrum me habere contigit. *Socin.* Ep. ad *Squarcialupum*, app. Tom. i. p. 362.

ven,

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ven, or conducted by the Spirit of God, is yet adapted to the manner of Men, and muſt take its Conſtruction from the common Rules of Interpretation agreed upon among Men. Now, if the *Fathers*, as living nearer the Fountain, had ſome Opportunities which we want, and might know ſome Things much better than we at this Diſtance can pretend to do, why ſhould we neglect or deſpiſe any Light or Help which they can give for our Direction, in ſettling the Senſe of Scripture? In *human* Laws, as I have hinted above, it has been always thought a good Rule of Interpretation (not excluding any other good Rule) to obſerve, upon what Occaſion the Laws were made, what was their general Scope or View, and how they were underſtood at their firſt framing, or immediately after, and to recollect how the *Practice* ran: Hence it is, that *Reports*, and *Precedents*, and *adjudged Caſes* are ſo highly uſeful in interpreting *human* Laws. The caſe is not much different in *divine Laws*; being that They alſo are written in *human* Language, and their Senſe is to be inveſtigated, and cleared up by the like *human* Means. If the *Fathers* were *fallible*, ſo alſo are we: And if They, with all their Advantages, might miſconſtrue Scripture, ſo may we much more. Therefore there is no Prudence in throwing off their Aſſiſtance as *uſeleſs*, or *ſuperfluous*. Even fallible Men may be uſeful Inſtructors to others as fallible: And in a *Multitude of*

Counſellors,

Counſellors, eſpecially ſuch Counſellors, *there is Safety* [r]. CHAP. VII.

II. But it is further pleaded, that Scripture is *plain* in all *Neceſſaries*, and therefore needs no Illuſtration from the *Antients*. We allow, that Scripture is *plain* in *Neceſſaries*; yea, it is what we urge and contend for: And there is nothing which offends us more, than that many Perſons will endeavour notwithſtanding, by violent Contorſions, far-fetch'd Subtilties, and ſtudied Evaſions, to elude and fruſtrate theſe *plain* Things. Such Conduct on the adverſe Side, makes it the more neceſſary to have Recourſe to *Antiquity*, for the greater *Security* againſt all ſuch Attempts. For while Scripture is *plain*, Antiquity is *plain* alſo; and *two* plain Things are better than *one*. God Himſelf hath taught us, by adding his *Oath* to his *Promiſe*, not to think any *Confirmation* ſuperfluous, which he is pleaſed to afford us. His Word alone might be *ſafely* depended upon, being *certain* and *infallible*: But *two immutable* Things afford the *ſtronger Conſolation* [t]; and God conſiders the Infirmities of Mankind. In like manner, tho' Scripture be very *plain* to reaſonable Men, ſo far as concerns *Neceſſaries*, yet by taking in *Antiquity* to it, the Evidence, upon the whole, becomes both *plainer* [u], and *ſtronger*. There is ſo much Weakneſs

[r] Prov. xi. 14.

[t] Hebr. vi. 17, 18.

[r] *Whitby, Diſſertat.* in Præf. p. 10, 19.

[u] *N. B.* It ſhould be obſerved that the Word *plain* is an equivocal Word, and of indeterminate Meaning, till it be carefully diſ-

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Weakneſs commonly in human Nature, and ſo much Reluctance ſhewn to the Reception of divine Truths, that we have need of all the *plain* Things we can any where procure: And had we twenty more as plain as Theſe, we could make uſe of them all, and indeed ſhould be obliged to do ſo, leſt otherwiſe we ſhould be found guilty of deſpiſing the Bleſſings of Heaven. It is certain, that there is ſomething very particular in the Concerns of *Religion*, that *plain* Things there, have not the ſame Force or Weight as They have any where elſe. It is the only Subject in the World,

diſtinguiſhed. It is a *Relative*, and Means plain to ſome or other. To God *all Things* are plain: To Angels *more* Things than to Man. Doctrines plain to *ſome Men* are not ſo to *others*, on account of Ignorance, Inattention, Prejudice, or any *Infirmity*, natural, or contracted. Things alſo may be plain by the help of *Means*, which are not ſo without the Uſe of ſuch Means. Moreover, there are *Degrees* of Plainneſs, for it conſiſts not in a Point, but admits of a Latitude. Beſides, the *plaineſt* Things in the World taken in a *right* Point of View, may *ceaſe* to be *plain*, when put into a *wrong* one; when induſtriouſly obſcured, embroiled, and intangled, by Snares and Fallacies, by involving many Things in one (which ſhould be kept ſeparate) or by expreſſing them in ambiguous, equivocal Terms, or by perplexing them with captious and ſophiſtical Queſtions. There are *Degrees* alſo of *Attention*, upon which the Degrees of *Plainneſs* do very much depend: And Attention depends upon the *Will*, and the Will is variouſly influenced by *Motives*, external or internal.

But tho' *Plainneſs* be really a *Relative*, and often varies according to the *Perſon*, and his Degree of *Attention*, *Capacity*, *Inclination*, &c. Yet we have formed ſome kind of Idea of an *abſolute Plainneſs*, abſtracted from particular Perſons; and we mean by it, as to the Point now in hand, ſuch a Plainneſs in the *Thing* it ſelf, or in the *Words* expreſſing it, as any one of tolerable *Capacity*, with a reaſonable *Attention*, and by the Uſe of the ordinary *Helps*, or *Means*, may competently underſtand: In this Senſe, or by this Standard, *Fundamentals* are commonly ſaid to be *plain*.

wherein

wherein a Man may diſpute the moſt *certain Facts*, and moſt *indubitable Proofs*, and yet be allowed to be in his Senſes: For if any one, in the common Affairs of Life, were to make it a Rule to believe nothing but what He *ſees*, or were to reject the *Faith* of all *Hiſtory*, He would undoubtedly be deſpiſed or pitied by every Body, as not well in his Wits. Seeing then that the Caſe of Religion is ſo widely different from all others, and that the *plaineſt* Evidences there often loſe their Effect, we can never be too ſolicitous in accumulating Evidence upon Evidence, and Teſtimony upon Teſtimony, to do the moſt we can towards relieving the Weakneſs, or conquering the Reluctance of Men ſlow to believe. And when we have done the beſt we can, and have purſued every reaſonable Method we can think of, we are yet to look upon it as *ſufficient*, only becauſe we can do no more. Wherefore, no *plainneſs* of Scripture can ever be juſtly thought to *ſuperſede* the Uſe of *Antiquity*; unleſs it could be ſuppoſed, that no additional *Light*, nor *Strength* can be borrowed from it: Which is too extravagant a Suppoſition to need any Confutation; beſides that I have already obviated every Suggeſtion of that kind, in the former part of this Chapter.

If it be ſaid, that *common Chriſtians*, at leaſt, can reap no Benefit from *Antiquity*, nor make any *uſe* of it; That will not be Reaſon ſufficient for throwing it aſide, ſo long as the *Learned* may. But even *common Chriſtians* do enjoy the Benefit

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of it, if not at *first* hand, yet at the *second*, *third*, or *fourth*; and that ſuffices here, as well as in other Caſes of as Weighty Concernment. How do they know, for inſtance, that Scripture is the Word of God? They know it *immediately* or *proximately* from their proper Guides, or other Inſtructors; who in the laſt Reſort, learn it from the *Antients*. So then, *ordinary* Chriſtians may thus *remotely* have the *Uſe* of Antiquity (not to mention other *nearer* ways [a]) with reſpect to the *Senſe* of Scripture, as well as with Regard to its *Authenticity*: And their *Faith* may be both ſtrengthen'd, and brighten'd by this additional Reinforcement. "The "People are to underſtand the *Grounds* of "their Faith, and to judge, by the *beſt Helps* "they can, what Doctrine is agreeable to "Scripture: But among thoſe *Helps*, we take "in, not barely the Aſſiſtance of their own "Guide, but the *Evidence* he brings, as to "the *Senſe* of the teaching Church, in the "*beſt* and *pureſt* Ages [b]." But to return.

We admit, as I before ſaid, that Scripture is very *plain* in *Neceſſaries*: As, for inſtance, nothing can be *plainer* from Scripture, than that Chriſt is *God*, and *over all God bleſſed for ever*, *true God*, *great God*, *Jehovah*, and the like; and that *divine* Attributes are aſcribed to Him, and *divine* Worſhip alſo, to make every thing clear, and to cut off all reaſonable Handle for Diſpute. But notwithſtanding

[a] See this Matter conſidered more at large, in Biſhop *Hare's Scripture vindicated*, p. 111, *&c.*

[b] Stillingfleet's Anſwer to J. S.'s Catholick Letters, p. 58.

that

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that all theſe Things are ſo *plain*, yet conſidering that we are not the *firſt* Men that ever looked into Scripture, but that others, who had as good Eyes as we and as upright Hearts, and a competent Meaſure of common Senſe (beſides ſome peculiar Advantages beyond what we can pretend to) have peruſed the ſame Scripture, before us; I ſay conſidering theſe Things, it would be ſomething of a Mortification to us, or would appear ſomewhat ſtrange, if ſuch Perſons ſhould not have found the ſame Doctrines then, which we have the Pleaſure to find now. For whatever is really *plain* to Moderns, and *neceſſary*, muſt, one would think, by parity of Reaſon, or for a ſtronger Reaſon, have been *plain* to the *Antients* alſo, and *neceſſary* to Them as well as to us. Accordingly, upon examining, we find, that the ſame Doctrine was *plain* to them, even ſo far as to be looked upon as an *Eſſential:* A Conſideration which adds the more Strength to what we had before proved from Scripture, as the want of ſuch concurring Suffrage would have been a perplexing Difficulty; I mean, while we have ſuch *antient* Monuments to look into, and to compare. Indeed, if they were all loſt, burnt, or otherwiſe extinguiſhed, our *Scripture-Proof* (ſuppoſing Scripture it ſelf to want no Proof) would ſtand firm without them: But when we have the *Antients* to compare with Scripture, and know that, in the very Nature of the Thing, They ought to tally with each other; The

Antients now, of Conſequence, muſt be either a very ſtrong *Confirmation* as to any Doctrines held for Articles of Faith, or as ſtrong an *Objection*. They are conſiderable Diſadvantages where they run counter, and as conſiderable Advantages where they favour.

III. It is ſometimes pleaded, that Scripture is its own beſt Interpreter, by comparing Texts with Texts, and therefore there is no need of *Fathers* in the Caſe; for in the *Beſt* we have all [c].

In reply to which, we are very ready to allow, that Comparing Scripture with Scripture is a very *good* Method of Interpretation, yea and the *beſt* and moſt *ſatisfactory* of any, to every rational Mind: But ſtill we do not ſee reaſon why it ſhould be thought to *ſuperſede* any other that is *good*. For, after we have thereby obtained all the Home-Light we can get, where will be the Harm of admitting ſtill further Light, if we can procure it, from abroad? The more we have of both kinds, the better: Every additional Increaſe or Improvement, tho' it were but ſmall in compariſon, yet has its Uſe, either for confirming the *Weak* and *Wavering*, or for comforting them who are *ſtrong* in Faith, or for confuting and confounding *Novelliſts*; but moſt of all for reclaiming Thoſe who are over apt to be led by *Authority*, and *great Names*, perhaps of mere *Moderns*. For

[c] Whitby Diſſertat. Præf p. 12.

certainly,

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certainly, if *Authority*, or *great Names*, or even *Numbers* are of any Weight; *Antients* are preferable to *Moderns*, conſidered as ſuch, *Fathers* and *Councils* to *private* Dogmatizers, and the *Chriſtian World* to a *few* Gainſayers. Such being the manifeſt and conſtant *Uſe* of the Argument drawn from *Antiquity*, ſuperadded to *Scripture*, there is great reaſon for taking it in after *Scripture*, that we may have the Benefit of *Both*.

The excellent *Buddeus*, otherwiſe a very judicious Writer, appears not ſo clear, or not ſo accurate in his Account of this Matter, as might be wiſhed. He gives his Judgment, "That neither *natural Reaſon*, nor *Tradition* "ſhould be the *Rule* of interpreting, but "*Scripture* it ſelf, and the *Analogy* of *Faith*[d]." Had He ſaid, neither one nor other, but *all together*, I think, He had ſaid right: But as he has taken in only *two* of the Things, excluding the reſt, as it ſeems, from bearing a part in the Interpretation of Scripture, He appears to me to have judged wrong upon the Caſe, or at leaſt to have fallen ſhort of his wonted Accuracy. For, certainly, He ought to have allowed ſomething to *natural Reaſon*,

[d] A *Socinianis*, non minus quam *Romanenſibus* diſcedimus, dum nec *Rationem*, nec *Traditiones* (aut Eccleſiæ Auctoritatem) pro regula et norma interpretandi ſcripturam agnoſcimus, ſed Scripturam ex *Scriptura* ſecundum *Analogiam Fidei* explicandam contendimus: Quam quidem viam et rectiſſimam et tutiſſimam eſſe, res ipſa oſtendit, et facile perſpiciat qui cuncta rite ſecum ponderaverit. *Buddei Iſagog.* Vol. ii. p. 1795. Conf. ejuſdem *Præfat.* ad Salom. Glaſſii opera. Edit Lipſ. A. D. 1725.

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and ſomething alſo to *Antiquity*, tho' not *every Thing*. There is a great deal of Difference between admitting either of them to govern abſolutely, and throwing them quite out: And there is a juſt *Medium* between giving each of them a *Negative*, and making either of them *ſole* Umpire. There are many Conſiderations, to be taken in, for the proceeding rightly in the Interpretation of Scripture; and all of them reſpectively muſt have their Share, as they have their Weight. To exemplify what I mean; *True* Interpretation of Scripture, cannot, in any Caſe whatever, run counter to any plain certain Principle of *natural Reaſon* (in as much as *Truth* can never be contrary to *Truth*) nor, in any Caſe whatever, to *Scripture* it ſelf *rightly* interpreted; nor, in any Caſe whatever, to the *Analogy* of Faith before proved (which amounts, nearly to the ſame with the preceding) nor, without the utmoſt Neceſſity, to the *natural*, *uſual*, *unforced* Senſe of the Words; nor, ſo far as concerns *Fundamentals*, to the *univerſal* Judgment of the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Church. Theſe, as I conceive, are the Butts and Boundaries within which every *true* Interpretation is confined: And whenever any pretended Interpretation is found to break through them, or through any of them, there needs no more, to pronounce it *falſe*. To expreſs the ſame Thing *affirmatively*, which before I have *negatively*, when any Interpretation of Scripture has all thoſe *five* Characters, (*viz.* *natural Reaſon*,

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parallel Places of *Scripture*, *Analogy* of *Faith*, *Propriety* of *Language*, and *Countenance* of *Antiquity*) to vouch directly for it, then it is as ſtrongly ſupported as it is *poſſible* for an Interpretation to be. If it has only *ſome* of thoſe *poſitive* Characters, or one only, the reſt not interfering, it *may be* a good Interpretation; but the *more* it has, ſo much the *ſurer* [e]. For example: The Doctrine I am here defending, has

[e] Dr. *Rogers*, in one of his Sermons, (Poſth. Serm. iv. p. 95, &c.) explains this whole Matter ſomewhat differently, but agreeing, in the main, with what I have here offered. His Thoughts upon the Point are comprized in the Particulars here following, which I ſhall produce in his own Words, as nearly as an Abridgment will permit.

" 1. Many Places of ſacred Writ are ſo *plain*, that no Man, " who reads or hears them, in a Language he is acquainted " with, can doubt of their Meaning.

" 2. The Senſe of *other* Places we collect from *rational De-* " *ductions*, comparing one Scripture with another.

" 3. Other Places there are which require the Knowledge of " *Hiſtory* of antient Facts and Cuſtoms, of *early Tradition*, and " *primitive* Acceptation, to determine their Senſe.

" 4. The Inſpiration of the Scriptures *ſuppoſed*, we cannot " conſiſtently with ſuch Suppoſition, either from the *Conſtruction* " *of the Words*, or from *Deductions* of Reaſon, or from *Authority*, " admit any Propoſition as the intended Senſe of Scripture, which " contradicts any *manifeſt Truth*.

" 5. Neither can we admit *contradictory* Expoſitions of the " ſame or different Places of Scripture.

" In the two laſt Caſes, we conclude *negatively* with the cleareſt " Aſſurance: But when we go on to aſcertain the Meaning *po-* " *ſitively*, The Senſe of Scripture which we receive in the *firſt* " *way*, by an immediate View, appears to us with *greateſt* Evi- " dence: And the Senſe we collect in the *ſecond way*, by ratio- " nal Deductions, is *more evident* than what we receive in the " *third* way, from the Affirmations of *Authority*.

So, this excellent Writer reſolves the *poſitive* Characters of true and juſt Interpretation, into *immediate View*, *rational Deductions*, and *Authority*, all having their proper Weight of *Evidence* reſpectively,

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has *Four* of the ſaid Characters *poſitively* for it (*viz.* Tenour of Scripture, Analogy of Faith, Propriety of Language, and *Antiquity*) and the *Fifth*, which is *natural Reaſon*, is not againſt it: Therefore it is a very juſt and reaſonable Interpretation. So many plain legible Characters of Truth ought, in all Equity, to over-rule any *ſeeming*, or *conjectural* Repugnancies as to the Nature of the Thing confeſſedly *myſterious*, ſo long as there is no *plain* Contrariety to any known Truth.

Hitherto I have been anſwering Thoſe Objections which aim at ſetting the *Fathers* aſide as needleſs, being *ſuperſeded*, (as is thought) by the Perfection, or Plainneſs, or Fulneſs of ſacred Writ. The remaining Objections, which I am to take notice of, are of another kind, ſtriking more directly at the *Reputation* of the *Fathers*, in order to inſinuate, that They are by no means qualified to ſerve the Purpoſes They are brought for, being more likely to perplex than to inſtruct a Reader, more apt to miſlead and draw us aſide, than to ſet us right.

IV. The *Obſcurity* of the *Fathers* makes up one Half of the learned *Daillé*'s Treatiſe

ſpectively, but in different Degrees. The two *negative* Characters are Checks upon all the *poſitive* ones, to aſcertain their Application, and to prevent the puſhing any of them too far. This Account, in Subſtance, differs ſo little from what I have offered, that it appears to contain much the ſame Thoughts placed in another Light, or differently ranged. It may be of uſe to a Reader to take the ſame Thing in two Views, and ſo to form his own Judgment, as he ſees beſt, out of *Both:* And therefore I have here preſented him with Both.

upon

upon That Subject. I need not be very particular in examining into that Plea here, becauſe it will come up again, in part, under another Article lower down, where I ſhall conſider it more diſtinctly. For the preſent, it may ſuffice to obſerve: 1. That Mr. *Daillé*, in ſome Inſtances, rhetoricates upon the Subject, and has frequently overſtrained. 2. Many Things have been cleared up ſince He wrote that Piece; (ſince the Year 1631) ſome by Himſelf, more by others after him: So that what might appear to be of ſome Force then, can have little or none now. 3. Particular Anſwers have been returned to the ſeveral Articles on the Head of *Obſcurity*, by Thoſe who have profeſſedly undertaken it[f], beſides what has been done occaſionally in *new Editions* of Fathers, or in *Bibliotheques*, or in *critical* Diſſertations. 4. Whatever Truth there may be in the Objection, as to ſundry controverted Points of inferior Moment, yet it affects not the Cauſe now before us: For *Daillé* Himſelf allows, that the *Fathers* are generally clear enough in Points *fundamental*, whereof This is one, in his Judgment at leaſt. He writes thus: "You ſhall there meet with "very *ſtrong* and *ſolid Proofs* of Thoſe *fundamental* Principles of our Religion, touching

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[f] *Scrivener*. adv. Dallæum. Par. I. per tot.
Reeves's Preface to the Apologiſts, p. 37, &c.
Natalis Alexander, Hiſt. Eccl. Sæc. ii. Diſſ. xvi. c. 22. p. 537, &c.
Beverege's, Cod. Can. vindicat. Procem. Sect. viii.

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" which we are all agreed; and alſo many " excellent Things laid open, tending to " the *right underſtanding* of theſe *Myſteries*, " and alſo of the *Scriptures* wherein they are " contained. In this Particular, their *Autho-* " *rity* may be of *good Uſe* to you, and may " ſerve as a *probable* Argument of the Truth g." So then, whatever *Obſcurity* may otherwiſe be found in the *Fathers* (like as in *Scripture* it ſelf) The Cauſe which we have now in hand, appears to be but little concerned in it, according to the Judgment of that learned Man, who made the moſt of the Objection, as to other Matters. For, tho' he ſometimes points out ſome *obſcure* Paſſages, as He conceived them to be, relating to Things *fundamental*, yet, upon the whole, He apprehended, that Thoſe Doctrines might be plainly enough traced up to the very Days of the Apoſtles, and that the *Fathers* might be exceeding *uſeful* to us in That View, and for That Purpoſe.

V. It has been frequently objected, that many of the *Fathers* have *erred*, and ſometimes groſsly: And large Collections, of their real or ſuppoſed Miſtakes, have been drawn out, and preſented to publick View h. Now, indeed, if any Man ſhould preſume to ſay,

g *Daillé* of the right Uſe of the Fathers, Part II. p. 184.
Si in vivis jam eſſet [*Dallæus*] quam ægrè ferret vir pientiſſimus, ſi aliqui reperirentur qui argumentis, quibus ipſe Cauſam *Pontificiam* adeo feliciter debellavit, ad labefactandam et ſubvertendam *Nicænam* Fidem abuterentur. *Cave* Ep. Apologet. p. 19.

h *Daillé*, Part. II. c. 4. p. 60, *&c.*
Whitby, Diſſertat. in Præfat. ſ. iv. p. 15, *&c.*

that

that the Fathers were *inſpired*, or *infallible* in what they wrote, ſuch a Collection of *Errors* might be of uſe for the confuting the falſe Preſumption: But how it affects their Credit or Character as *Witneſſes* of the Church's prime Doctrines, in their Times, appears not. It is not uncommon for thoſe very *Fathers*, where They give a *wrong* and *falſe* Opinion, to make a *true* Diſcovery of the Church's Sentiments, in that very Inſtance, *contrary* to their *own*. Therefore a Reader ſhould know how to diſtinguiſh between delivering an *Opinion*, and reporting a *Fact*; as alſo, between appealing to the *Fathers* as unerring *Judges*, and appealing to them as faithful *Witneſſes*.

But to ſpeak more directly to the Charge of *Errors*, it may be juſtly pleaded in Abatement, that upon a careful Review, many of them have been found to be purely *imaginary*, mere Miſtakes, or Miſrepreſentations of the too precipitate Correctors: And of thoſe that are *real*, moſt will be ſeen in Things only of a *problematical* kind, and of a *ſlight* Nature [i]. Or if they be of a more *grievous* ſort, They were the Miſtakes of ſome *Few*, and were either not *univerſal* [k], or not *antient*, and never

[i] Monebo tantum, in Patrum ſcriptis *Dogmata Philoſophica* a *Fidei Articulis* probe eſſe diſtinguenda. In *his*, ſacris Literis et Catholicæ Traditioni ſtrictius ſe alligant, & in rei ſumma omnes conveniunt: In *illis*, majori utuntur Libertate, et opiniones ſæpius adhibent quæ in Philoſophorum Scholis ventilari ſolebant; quin et in explicandis Fidei myſteriis quandoque voces e Schola Philoſophica petitas admovent, ſed ad Chriſtianum ſenſum accommodatas. *Cave* Epiſt. Apologet. p. 48.

[k] See *Grotius* de Jur. B. et P. l. i. c. 2. ſ. 9. p. 60.

inſiſted

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inſiſted upon as Articles of Faith, and *Terms* of *Communion*. So that whatever *Errors* are diſcovered in any *Father* or *Fathers*, they do not invalidate the Argument drawn from the *univerſal* Agreement of the antient Churches in the *prime* Things. However, there have not been wanting, upon occaſion, learned Hands [l] to draw up Apologies for the *Fathers*, either in ſeparate Diſcourſes, or in Prefaces to new Editions, or by way of Note, or the like; by which means moſt of thoſe unworthy Aſperſions have been happily removed, and the black Catalogues much reduced. A learned Foreigner [m], not long ago, being juſtly ſenſible of the miſchievous Tendency of that *unnatural* Practice of ſome Chriſtians, in throwing Contempt upon the brighteſt Ornaments of the Chriſtian Church, took the Pains to conſider the particular Articles of Doctrine upon which the *Fathers* have been wrongfully ſuſpected, or charged, and to do them Juſtice againſt their indiſcreet, or over-cenſorious Accuſers.

Since that Time, I do not know a warmer or keener Adverſary that the *Fathers* have

[l] *Thorndicius* de Rat. et Jur. Fin. controv. c. 25. *Scrivener*. adv. *Dall*. Par. II. c. iv. p. 185. *Cavii* Epiſtola Apologetica. *Reeves*'s Preface, p. 67, *&c.* Remarks on *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. with regard to primitive Antiquity, Part I. continued, printed for *Crownfield*, 1733.

[m] *Zornius Hamburgenſis*. Vindiciæ Patrum per omnes Fidei Chriſtianæ Articulos, oppoſitæ *Joanni Dallæo:* Una cum ſelectis obſervationibus contra recentiores Patrum Cenſores, *Anglos*, *Belgas*, *Gallos*. Inter Opuſcul. Sac. Tom. i. A. D. 1709. *Gieſſæ Haſſorum*. p. 659. Edit. Nup. A D. 1731.

had,

had, than Monſ. *Barbeyrac*, Profeſſor of *Civil Law* at *Groningen*, and known to the learned World by his *French* Tranſlations of *Pufendorf* and *Grotius*, and his learned Notes upon Both. He attacks the *Fathers* principally upon the Head of *Morality*, (as his Subject led him to do) and ſeems to exert his utmoſt Endeavours to ſink their Reputation for *Senſe*, and *Conduct*, and even for *Conſcience* too, in ſome meaſure, in order to ſtrike them out of all Credit or Authority [n]. His Work has twice appeared in *Engliſh*, (as well as in *French*) and may therefore deſerve ſome notice in this Place, as much as I may have room for, not to make too long an Excurſion. CHAP. VII.

That *Satyr* upon the *Fathers* (for it deſerves no better Name) had not long been abroad, before Mr. *Ceillier*, a learned Roman Catholick, drew up a formal Anſwer to it, of which I have ſeen little more than the Title [o], and a few Extracts. Afterwards, the learned *Buddeus* animadverted pretty largely upon Him, detecting ſome of his Miſtakes, but with great Tenderneſs; moderating, as it were, between Mr. *Ceillier* and Him, in reſpect of ſeveral Particulars. [p] *Buddeus* was Himſelf not the moſt zealous Admirer of the *Fathers*; and therefore what he ſays in their *Favour*, may

[n] Prefatory Diſcourſe to his French Verſon of *Puſendorf*; ſince rendered into *Engliſh*, and prefixed to the *Engliſh* Edition of 1729, Sect. ix, x. p. 18, *&c.*

[o] Apologie de la Morale des Peres de l'Egliſe contre les injuſtes accuſations du Sieur Jean Barbeyrac, Pariſ. 1718.

[p] *Buddeus*, Iſagog. Vol. i. p. 620——642.

be

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be juſtly thought not to exceed in any reſpect, but to fall within Compaſs. Some officious Gentleman amongſt us, having met with Monſ. *Barbeyrac*'s French Treatiſe, publiſhed it ſeparately in our Language, prefixing a kind of Boyiſh Title [q] to it, and recommending it with ſome Airs of Inſult, ſuch as are frequently incident to little Minds. Not long after, an ingenious Gentleman printed a Reply [r], to rebuke the *Tranſlator*, for his Rudeneſs, and at the ſame time to defend the *Fathers* againſt the injurious Accuſations of the *Author* Himſelf: Which He has effectually performed, with good Learning, and ſolid Judgment.

Now, ſeeing that ſo much has been done already, I may content my ſelf with a few Strictures, or brief Reflexions. In Juſtice to the *Fathers*, and to *primitive Chriſtianity* ſtruck at through their Sides, it ought to be told, that the learned *Civilian* has not dealt fairly with the Publick in that Article. He has not been careful about the *Facts* upon which he grounds his Cenſure, but has often taken them upon *Truſt* from others, tranſcribing their Overſights, or *partial* Accounts. Indeed, he makes a kind of Apology for his taking ſo much at *ſecond* Hand: For he ſays, "He "deſignedly pitched upon Examples which "had been *already* remarked and produced by "*others*, and are extant in Books moſt common

[q] The Spirit of Eccleſiaſticks of all Sects and Ages, &c. 1722.
[r] The Spirit of Infidelity detected. By a Believer, 1723.

"and

"and eaſy to be had[f]." But then, He ſhould have enquired whether thoſe Examples had not been *already* replied to, and competently cleared up, and whether, at leaſt, they were not capable of it. And He ſhould have conſidered further, whether the Authors whom he copies from, were all Perſons to be intirely relied upon in what They ſay, as Men of known Learning, Judgment, Candor, and Modeſty; not *prejudiced* againſt the Fathers, nor otherwiſe apt to be cenſorious, and over ſevere in diſcovering *imaginary* Faults, or expoſing *real* ones. Before one determines any thing as to the *Character* of the Fathers from ſecond-hand Reports, it would be proper to inquire whether their Accuſers were themſelves Men of clear and unexceptionable Characters. It is no Excuſe to a Perſon of Learning and Abilities, that He ſuffered himſelf to be impoſed upon by others, in a Matter which required Care, and Faithfulneſs. CHAP. VII.

Beſides his too often deceiving Himſelf, or others with *falſe* Facts, even thoſe that are *true*, in part, or in the main, are yet ſeldom placed in a true Light. Every real or ſeeming Fault of the *Antients* is rhetorically aggravated, the hardeſt Conſtruction commonly put upon it, and no favourable Allowances are brought in to qualify; But after ſaying the unkindeſt Things which He had any *Colour* for, and a great deal of Art uſed to contrive ſuch Colour,

[f] Prefatory Diſcourſe. ſ. x. p. 33.

He

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He forgets to afford them their due Praiſes in any thing, to counterbalance the Obloquy. So that were a Reader to form his Idea of the *Fathers*, only by what he finds in That Repreſentation, He would go near to make it the very Reverſe of their true and juſt Character. I canot here take upon me to criticize the whole Work; That has been done already by abler Hands: But I ſhall mention a few Particulars, to give the Readers a Taſte of his way and manner, whereby they may competently judge of the reſt.

The Author falls firſt upon *Athenagoras*, and charges him with *ſeeming to eſtabliſh the worſhip of Angels* [t]. But this is a *falſe* Report. *Athenagoras* neither *ſays* it, nor *ſeems* to ſay it. Indeed *Dupin*, whether to favour the *Romiſh* Cauſe, or whether by mere Forgetfulneſs or Overſight, had ſaid the ſame Thing: But Monſ. *Barbeyrac* underſtands the Nature of *Evidence* too well to apprehend, that the retailing a Miſreport can amount to a Proof. He has another Complaint againſt the ſame *Athenagoras* for diſallowing *ſecond* Marriages. The Fact is true in ſome Senſe or other; but what *ſecond* Marriages, is the Queſtion. Might not *Athenagoras* mean, marrying again after wrongful *Divorce*? A very learned Man [u] has pleaded much, and well, for that Conſtruction: And it is favoured by *Athenagoras*'s [v] grounding his

[t] Prefatory Diſcourſe, ſ. ix. p. 18.
[u] Suicer. Theſaur. in voce δίγαμος, p. 895.
[v] Athenag. Legat. p. 130.

Doctrine

Doctrine upon our Lord's own Words [w] relating to *ſuch* ſecond Marriages. CHAP. VII.

And tho' he ſpeaks againſt the Marriage as not good after the *Death* of the *Wife*, yet he may be underſtood only of *ſuch Wife*, wrongfully divorced before. For He thought, that the *Adultery* before incurred, by marrying in her *Life-time*, did not ceaſe by Her *Death*. The Marriage contracted in *Adultery*, like an Error in the firſt Concoction, could never be fully corrected, but would ſtill retain its primitive Impurity, as having been *null*, and wrong from the firſt. If his Words may admit that Senſe, it is ſufficient: For an Accuſer is bound to make good his Allegation, and the old Rule is, *in dubiis benigniora ſemper præferenda*. I may add, that *Athenagoras* has been always reputed a Man of the *Church*: And yet it is certain that the Doctrine here charged upon Him, was condemned by the *Church* in the *Montaniſts*, and *Novatians*. Which is a further Preſumption in his Favour, and ſeems to juſtify the mild and candid Conſtruction of the Words in queſtion.

The next Man Mr. *B.* falls upon, is *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, whom he uſes more unkindly than he had before uſed *Athenagoras*. He charges him with three ſpecial Faults [x]. 1. With teaching *Stoical Paradoxes*, for Chriſtian Doctrine. 2. With maintaining that *Chriſt and his Apoſtles had not any Paſſions at all*. 3. With

[w] Mark x. 11. Mat. xix. 9. Luke xvi. 18.

[x] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 19.

CHAP. VII. *juſtifying the Idolatry of the Pagans.* The firſt Article appears captious and frivolous. For, what if *Clemens*, whether the better to reconcile the *Stoicks* to Chriſtianity, or whether to turn their own Artillery upon them, made uſe of their Language and Phraſeology, to recommend true and ſound *Chriſtian* Principles by ? where was the Harm? Or what was there in it, which might not well become ſo wiſe and ſo good a Man? Let Mr. *B.* put himſelf in *Clemens*'s Place, and then conſider, whether He could do any Thing better or more commendable in thoſe Circumſtances.

The *ſecond* Article is founded in nothing but Miſconſtruction, and was cleared up long ago by the learned Dr. *Cave* [z], and by others [a] after him: Not to mention what the *Benedictines* have ſaid more largely, in Defence of *Hilary* againſt the ſame Accuſation [b].

The *Third* Article is entirely without Grounds; a Concluſion drawn without *Premiſſes* to ſupport it [c], a *falſe* Inference charged upon very innocent Words, in Contradiction to the whole Tenor of *Clemens*'s Writings. Is this dealing fairly with the *Antients*, or with the *Publick*?

[y] See *Spirit of Infidelity* detected, p. 31.
[z] *Cave*, Epiſt. Apolog. p. 50, *&c.*
[a] Natal. Alexand. E. H. ſ. ii. Diſſert. 8. p. 395.
Nourii Apparat. ad Biblioth max. Vol. i. p. 968.
[b] Præfat. General. ſ. iii. p. 30, *&c.*
[c] *Vid.* Buddei Iſagog. p. 623.
Spirit of Infidelity detected, p. 33.

Beſides

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Beſides theſe particular Charges upon *Clemens*, he has ſome others more *general*, which are either injurious, or frivolous. He blames Him for want of *Method* and *Coherence*, for being full of *Declamation* and *myſtical Alluſion*, and the like [d]. Which kind of Diſcourſe is it ſelf *declamatory*, and *detracting*, not becoming a Perſon of Candour, or Gravity, who would make Allowances for Circumſtances, and Times, and weigh Things in an equal Balance. Why muſt every Author walk in Tramels, and be confined to Rules of Art? Immethodical Collections are uſeful in their Kind, and ought to have their proper Commendation. But it is further ſaid, as from *Le Clerc*, that *Clemens*'s *Pædagogue abounds with Maxims exceſſively rigid, and far remote from any thing now in Practice.* We might except to *Le Clerc*, as to a Perſon of uncommon Delicacy, known to lean generally to the *ſeverer* Side, and none of the beſt natured or moſt happy in his Cenſures [e], but *prejudiced*, by his Principles, againſt the primitive *Fathers*; jealous of a Reputation which, He ſaw, ſtood in his Way, and much afraid of their Superiority. Perhaps, after all, he miſtakes *Clemens*'s Meaning: Or if

[d] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 19.

[e] Vid. *Perizonius* in Ægypt. Origin Præfat. p. 8. Curtius Vindicat. p. 10.——23. 185.——191.
Jenkins, Defenſ. Auguſtin. adv. Phereponum. Præf. p. 9.
Reflections on Learning, p. 235, &c.
Continuation of the Anſwer of the Hiſt. of Oracles, Præf. p. 47, &c.
Cave Epiſt. Apologet. p. 9, 10, 11, 12.
Cum multis aliis.

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he does not, his Cenſure may be more an Argument of the *preſent* Degeneracy, than of *Clemens*'s exceſſive Rigour or Auſterity. I ſhall only add, that before we blame the *Antients* for too ſtrict a Morality (an Error, if it be one, on the right Hand) we ought to be well apprized of the *Circumſtances* of thoſe Times: For, diverſity of Circumſtances requires a Diverſity in the Application of the ſame general Rules, and preſcribes as different a Conduct.

I ſhall not go on to the other *Fathers* whom this worthy Gentleman has animadverted upon: I have given enough for a Sample, in the two firſt. But I ſhall proceed to obſerve ſomething with reſpect to his general manner of carrying on the Impeachment. After He has done with the Particulars, charged upon the *Fathers* Man by Man, He pretends to have *demonſtrated clearly*, that the *moſt celebrated* Doctors of the *ſix* firſt *Centuries* were but *bad Maſters*, and *very poor Guides* in Matters of *Morality*. Here we ſee, what it was that he *aimed* at; tho' He has *demonſtrated* nothing, but a ſtrong Inclination to detract from true and great Worth. There is an artificial Confuſedneſs in his throwing *ſix Centuries* together: *Three* or a little more will be enough for us to inſiſt upon, ſo far as our Argument from *Antiquity* is concerned. Every body knows that Corruptions came in *gradually*, more and more every Day, after the *World*,

as it were, crept into the *Church*[f]: We make a Diſtinction between the elder and the later Times. It will not be eaſy to perſuade us, that in thoſe *beſt* and *pureſt* Ages, when *Chriſtian Practice* was in the Heighth of Perfection, that the *Theory* of it was ſo very lame and defective, as he is pleaſed to intimate; or that the *Guides* and *Maſters* were ſo exceeding *low*, or *bad*, when the *Scholars* or *Diſciples* were, for the moſt part, eminently good. If any one doubts of the Fact, He may ſatisfy himſelf by looking into the Accounts given both by *Chriſtians* and *Pagans*[g]; ſuch as make it evident, that the Morals of that Time were the Admiration and Envy of the *Heathen* World then, as they are an excellent *Pattern*[h] for the Chriſtian World ſince. The Author

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[f] Scribere diſpoſui ab Adventu Salvatoris uſque ad noſtram ætatem, id eſt ab Apoſtolis uſque ad *noſtram temporis Fæcem*, quomodo et per quos Chriſti Eccleſia nata ſit, et adulta, Perſecutionibus creverit, et Martyriis coronata ſit: Et poſtquam ad Chriſtianos Principes venerit, *Potentia* quidem et *divitiis* major, ſed *virtutibus minor* facta ſit. *Hieronym.* vit. *Maleh.* Opp. Vol. iv. p. 91.

[g] The Teſtimonies are collected into one View, by *Cave* in his *primitive Chriſtianity*.
Bingham, in his *Chriſtian Antiquities*, B. vi. c. 1.
Fabricius, Salutaris Lux Evangelii, c. x. p. 194, *&c.*
Baltus's Anſwer to *Fontenelle*'s Hiſt. of Oracles, Vol. ii. p. 97.

[h] Dr. *Wotton*, in a Treatiſe where he intended to extol the *Moderns*, and to adjudge them the Preference as often as he could, yet took care to give this Teſtimony to *antient* Chriſtianity:
" It is certain, that many of the ableſt of the Antient *Fathers*
" were *excellent Caſuiſts*; as indeed every Man who has a right
" Judgment, an honeſt Mind, and a thorough Acquaintance with
" the Deſign of our bleſſed Saviour revealed in the Goſpel, muſt
" of

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may conceive as highly as he pleaſes, of *modern Morality*, but impartial Judges will think it no Commendation of it to have it ſet at *Variance* with *primitive Chriſtianity*: To *differ* from That Standard, in any thing material, is to come *ſhort* of it, ſuppoſing *Circumſtances* to be the ſame. Neither is want of *artificial* Method any more an Objection againſt the *Antients*, than againſt *Scripture* it ſelf, the beſt *Ethicks* of any.

But to proceed with our Author, He runs off for a while into declamatory Invective againſt Thoſe who are *jealous of the Honour of the Fathers*: He *pities them with all his Heart*, thinking it *inhuman to inſult them*[i]; but doing it all the time. Then he gravely tells his Reader, a formal *Untruth*, that they *tacitly* ſuppoſe the *Fathers* to have been *infallible*[k]; as if he had intended only to guard againſt a falſe Notion of the *Infallibility* of the Fathers[l]. But there is a very wide Diſtance between ſuppoſing them *infallible*, and repreſenting them as *bad Maſters*, *very poor Guides*, &c. This learned Gentleman, I preſume, does not pretend to be *infallible*; and yet he might think himſelf ill uſed, if repreſented as a *bad Maſter*,

" of Neceſſity be. And if at this Diſtance many of their De-
" ciſions ſeem over ſevere, there is as great at leaſt (if not greater)
" Reaſon to ſuſpect that the Complaints now-a-days raiſed
" againſt Them, may ariſe from *our Degeneracy*, as from their *un-*
" *warrantable Strictneſs*. *Wotton*'s Reflections on ancient and modern Learning, p. 369.

[i] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 25.
[k] Ibid. p. 25.
[l] Ibid. p. 26.

or

or a *very poor Guide*: There is a *Medium* between the *Extremes*. CHAP. VII.

He brings up again, ſoon after, the Charge of *groſs Errors*, *moſt profound Ignorance* of what they *ought* to have known; adding, that *moſt of them*, more or leſs, were *led by Paſſion*, and that their Conduct *frequently* was neither *regular*, nor *juſtifiable* [m]. Well then, ſurely This is ſomething more than barely ſaying, they were *fallible* Men; and one may preſume to contradict ſuch a Miſreport of them, without maintaining that they were *infallible*. How will this learned Gentleman be able to prove that the Character He has here given is their true general Character, ſuch as will ſuit the *Three firſt* Centuries? Church Hiſtory is flatly contrary, and the Chriſtian World hitherto has been uſed to honour them with the Title of the *beſt* and *pureſt* Ages. He refers us twice [n] to ſome tart Reflections of *Gregory Nazianzen* upon ſome of the Clergy in his Time, about *A. D.* 381. Perhaps *Nazianzen* himſelf might be led by Reſentment to aggravate in ſome meaſure; for he was a Man of Spirit, had ſome Warmth, and might drop too ſevere a Cenſure, under a Senſe of the ill Uſage He had met with. But ſuppoſing his Cenſure to be ſtrictly juſt, what Argument is there in it? The Clergy about 381 were guilty of many and great Faults, therefore the *whole Order* were as guilty all along, for 280 Years together; reckoning from

[m] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 26. [n] Ibid. p. 18, 34.

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the Apoſtolick Age. I ſee not by what Rules of Reaſoning, ſuch *Conſequence* can be drawn [o]. Every Body knows how miſerably the Church had been rent aſunder by Parties and Factions, from the Time that *Arianiſm* broke out; that is, for 60 Years backwards, or thereabout: By means whereof, Mens Paſſions were inflamed, and their Tempers ſowred. But how does This affect the elder Times, when all the Biſhops of the Chriſtian Church were in the main unanimous, and held amicably together againſt *Jews*, *Pagans* and *Hereticks*? Allow that Heats and Animoſities prevailed much among Churchmen, towards the End of the fourth Century, and that the State of the Church at that Time was become very corrupt, according to the Accounts given by *Nazianzen*: But then allow alſo, that ſuch Corruptions were of recent Date, and that the like had not been ſeen in elder Times, before the Riſe of *Arius*, as *Nazianzen* himſelf teſtifies [p]. And he had a vaſt Eſteem of one Council, at leaſt, the Council of *Nice*, older than what he ſpeaks of. So then, if *Nazianzen* is a competent Evidence to found the *Objection* upon, let him be ſo alſo on our Side, to ſupply

[o] Exemplum profert [*Clericus*] Concilii C. P. 1. quo *Gregorius Nazianzenus* factioſis quorundam Artibus vexatus, ſede ſua ceſſit potius quam expulſus eſt; unde *ſervidioris ingenii vir* πολυθρύλλητον illud de Synodis judicium protulit. Sed fac hanc illamve Synodum iniquè ſe geſſiſſe, et nullam veritatis, nullam innocentiæ rationem habuiſſe: An mox *omnes* ſunt damnandæ rejiciendæ, exterminandæ? *Cave*, Epiſt. Apologet. p. 25.

[p] Nazianz. Orat. xxi. p. 380, c.

us with a proper Anſwer, as far as our Cauſe can be concerned in the Queſtion. CHAP. VII

The Author proceeds to conteſt the Right which the *Fathers* have been thought to have, to the very modeſt Title of *Propagators of the Chriſtian Religion:* He thinks, it ſhould be given to the *Apoſtles* only [q]. But certainly the *Fathers* ſucceeded to the Apoſtles in the great Work of *propagating* Chriſtianity, and therefore were as *properly*, (tho' not altogether ſo *eminently*) Propagators of it, as the Apoſtles themſelves. Yea, They alſo were *eminently* ſuch during the Time that *Miracles* laſted, that is to ſay, for *Three* Centuries at leaſt. But he is pleaſed to aſk, a little lower in the ſame Page, *Why muſt the Fathers of the Three or Six firſt Centuries have been Men of true Piety and Knowledge, rather than Thoſe of the Tenth or Eleventh?* But why does he inſert, *or Six*, except it be to blend and confound what ſhould be kept diſtinct, and to put a Fallacy upon the Reader? Let the Queſtion be aſked about the *Three firſt* Centuries, and we can aſſign many and good *Reaſons* why they muſt have been, in the general, *better Men* than Thoſe of the *Tenth* or *Eleventh:* Or if the *Reaſons* ſhould not ſatisfy, we appeal to Teſtimony, to certain *Fact*, which ſuperſedes all Reaſons. As to the fourth, fifth and ſixth Centuries, they might decline in Proportion, and did ſo, tho' there were ſome excellent Men in all: Which however I have no need to conſider.

[q] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 26, 27.

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A little after, He falls again to ſoftening, and now he aſks, *Muſt the Fathers have been liable to no Failings, no Paſſions, no Errors, no Ignorance at all*[s]? But was that the Queſtion? Why all this Shifting and Shuffling, if a Man were not conſcious of a bad Cauſe, and of his acting an unhandſome Part? The *Fathers* of the *Three firſt* Centuries (that *Golden Age* of Chriſtianity, tried and purified in the Fire of Perſecution) tho' not exempt from *Failings*, nor *infallible*, were yet Men of a higher Character than Thoſe of the *Tenth*, or *Eleventh*; and were not *bad Maſters*, nor *very poor Guides*, but the contrary: That is what we ſay, and what we abide by. He goes on to tell us, that He does *not pretend to ſay*, that they were all *a pack of profligate Wretches*[t]. No; God forbid. I know not whether *Celſus*, *Porphyry*, or *Julian* would have ſaid ſuch a Thing, in the greateſt Extremity of their Rage: They had ſome Regard to Truth, and to publick Report and to their own *Characters*[u]. But tho' he does not ſay That, what will he at length ſay? *There were* ſome *among them who were, in* ſome meaſure, *Men of Piety and Knowledge*[x]. How

[s] Prefatory Diſc. p. 28.

[t] Ibid. p. 28.

[u] "The Heathens themſelves, even ſuch as were the greateſt "Enemies to the Chriſtian Religion, could not forbear often to "do Juſtice to their great Knowledge, and eminent Sanctity." So ſays *F. Baltus* in anſwer to *Fontenelle. Continuation*, &c. p. 97. And he inſtances in *Porphyry*, and the *Heathen* Philoſophers of his Time; He mentions *Libanius* alſo, and *Longinianus*, and *Maximus Madaurenſis*.

[x] Ibid. p. 28.

hard to extort the ſlighteſt Compliment upon thoſe great and good Men! Tho' He can be laviſh enough elſewhere towards *Confucius* a *Pagan*[v], and towards *Hobbes*[w], a reputed *Atheiſt*. He proceeds again to paſs a decretory Sentence upon the *Fathers*, in the ſame *detracting* way; that *Their Virtues were, for the* generality, *far from being any way conſiderable*, and their *Knowledge commonly falſe and confuſed*[x]: And he appears to be much offended with thoſe who would *bring* him *back* to the primitive Food of *Huſks* and *Acorns*[y]. Yet the illuſtrious *Grotius* was plentifully fed with thoſe *Huſks*, or elſe he had never been *Grotius*. And he had a very great Eſteem and Value for them: Which, as it appears in all his Works, ſo more particularly in That admirable Treatiſe of his, his Syſtem of Morality. He underſtood the valuable Uſe of them to That very Science, has intimated it over and over in expreſs Words[z], and exemplified it quite through that excellent Performance. I am aware that Monſ. *Barbeyrac* in his Edition of *Grotius*, and in his *French* Verſion, has *Notes* of *Correction* upon thoſe Paſſages of his Author, and condemns even his Maſter *Grotius* now, as well as the *Fathers* before. But *Grotius* was a wiſe Man, and knew what he ſaid; beſides that the Thing ſpeaks it ſelf. I may

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[v] Pref. Diſc. ſ. xv. p. 44. [w] Ibid. ſ. xxix. p. 80.
[x] Ibid. p. 33. [y] Ibid. p. 35.
[z] Grotius de Jur. B. et P. Proleg. n. li. p. 32, 33. Ed. 1720. Conf. l. i. c. 2. ſ. 9. p. 60.

add,

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add, that this Gentleman himſelf, who has *profited* ſo much by *Grotius* and *Puſendorf*, (who *profited* by the *Fathers*) has been in ſome meaſure obliged to the *Fathers*, tho' it were only at ſecond or third Hand. But the *firſt* Hand is undoubtedly the beſt [a]: And if any Man would expect ever to come up to *Grotius*, it muſt be, not merely by reading *Grotius*, but by reading as he read, and doing as he did [b].

The Concluſion which the Author makes, is ſuitable to the reſt, and runs thus: "Not-withſtanding that great *Inaccuracy* of the

[a] "Conſtant reading of the moſt perfect *modern* Books, which "does not go jointly on with the *Antients* in their Turns, "will, by bringing the *Antients* into Diſuſe, cauſe the *Learn-ing* of the Men of the next Generation to ſink; by reaſon, "that they, not drawing from thoſe *Springs* from whence thoſe "*excellent Moderns* drew, whom they only propoſe to follow, "nor taking thoſe Meaſures which theſe Men took, muſt for "want of that Foundation which their *modern Guides* firſt, "carefully laid, fail in no long Compaſs of Time." *Wotton's Reflections*, &c. Pref. p. 3.

[b] The learned *Buddeus*, a judicious and moderate Man, and not prejudiced on the Side of the *Fathers*, does Juſtice to them and to *Grotius*, both at once, in theſe remarkable Words: "Sæ-"pius igitur antiquiſſimis etiam Eccleſiæ Doctoribus, de Juris "naturalis Capitibus, *haud perfunctorie* Sermo inſtituitur. *Ba-"ſilium Magnum*, *Gregorium Nazianzenum*, ipſumque *Chryſoſto-"mum*, non tantum Græcæ, ſed univerſæ quacunque patet, Ec-"cleſiæ ſummum decus evolvat, legat, ſcrutetur, cui dubium "ſorte ambiguumque id quod aſſeritur, videtur. Hos *ingenio "acri*, *judicio ſingulari*, Juris hujus Quæſtiones, quoties eas at-"tingerent (attigerunt autem ſæpius) expediviſſe conſtat: Ut "ipſe *Hugo Grotius*, Reſtaurator hujus Philoſophiæ feliciſſimus, "tum demum et Pondus et Robur, et Lucem inſignem, ſe aſ-"ſertis ſuis conciliare poſſe, ſi Præſulum horum Auctoritate ſen-"tentiam ſuam muniret, fuerit opinatus." *Budd. Hiſtor. Juris naturalis*, p. 16.

" *Fathers*, which has often cauſed them to commit *conſiderable Errors*; notwithſtanding that fancy they had for *vain Subtilties*, which made them neglect Things of *greater Importance*; notwithſtanding all This, I ſay, the *fundamental* Doctrines of *Religion* and *Morality* have ſtill been preſerved amongſt Chriſtians, even in the moſt diſmal Ages of Darkneſs and Vice[c]." Now, tho' here he is pleaſed to attribute no more (in reſpect of *Fundamentals*) to the *beſt* and *pureſt* Times, than to the *moſt diſmal Ages of Darkneſs and Vice*, (as before he had been pleaſed to compare the *Tenth* and *Eleventh* with the *Three* firſt) yet one might have expected to find, that he had agreed however with Thoſe *firſt* Ages in all thoſe *Fundamentals*, and have acknowledged his Obligations to them for their Care and Zeal in handing them down to us. But He refers us, for Explication of *Fundamentals*, to a famous Treatiſe of *Le Clerc*'s, at the End of *Grotius de Veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ*. A. D. 1709. A Treatiſe ſo indefinite and looſe, that one ſcarce knows what it aims at; except it be, that nothing ſhould paſs for a *Fundamental* which has been ever *diſputed* by Men calling themſelves *Chriſtians*, and profeſſing *Scripture*, however interpreted, to be their *Rule*[d]. Which

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[c] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 34.

[d] See that Treatiſe of *Le Clerc*'s briefly examined by *Buddeus*, in his *Miſcellanea Sacra*, Par. I. p. 320.

Compare *Turretin.* de Articul. Fundament. p. 13.

is

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is judging of *important* Truths, not by the *Word of God* ſoberly underſtood, nor by *Catholick Tradition*, nor by the *Reaſon* of Things, but by the floating Humors and Fancies of Men; as if all Chriſtian Doctrines were to be expunged out of the Liſt of *Neceſſaries*, which have had the Misfortune to be *diſputed* amongſt us, and a *ſhort Creed* were to be made out of the *Remainder*. But what if others, with Baron *Herbert* of *Cherbury*, or with the Author of the *fundamental Conſtitutions* of *Carolina*, building upon the ſame Principles of *Latitude*, and willing to compound all *Differences*, ſhould adviſe us to admit nothing for a *Fundamental*, but what all Mankind have hitherto agreed in, and for the future ſhall agree in, *Atheiſts* only excepted; where will then at length Theſe Preſumptuous Schemes end? Or when will weak Men leave off dictating to an all-knowing God, preferring their own fond Devices to the Wiſdom of Heaven?

To be ſhort, That Treatiſe of *Le Clerc*'s, while wholly intent upon diſcharging *Unneceſſaries* (as he ſuppoſed them) takes no due Care for preſerving the *Vitals* of Chriſtianity; but is much ſuch another Cure for our religious Ferments, as bleeding a Man to Death would be for a *Fever*. I preſume, one principal View was, to throw out the Doctrine of the *Trinity*; (tho' it might lead a great deal farther) and it was That Conſideration chiefly, which induced Him, and many others,

to vilify the antient *Fathers* of the Chriſtian Church [e]. But I proceed. CHAP. VII.

Mr. *B.* beſides his Ill-will towards the *Fathers*, appears to diſcover ſomething of an unfriendly Diſpoſition towards *Eccleſiaſticks* at large, in more Inſtances than one. But he is particularly offended with the *publick Sermons*, as *ſeeming* to him *not very inſtructive* on the Head of *Morality* [f]. His Tranſlator here ſenſible of the Indecency of the Reflection, endeavours to excuſe and ſoften it by a Note; ſuggeſting that he might intend it only againſt *Sermons and Books in French*, not againſt the Compoſitions of the *Engliſh*, or *Dutch*. It was kindly offered: But I find not that the Author himſelf has any where made the Exception, or inſinuated that he intended any. However, admitting that he had a View to the *French* only, yet the Reflection can hardly be acquitted of ſome Degree of *Immodeſty*: For, ſurely, the *French Proteſtant* Divines have deſerved a better Treatment. He quotes *Placette* and

[e] Serio hæc mecum penſitanti, vix ulla commodior occurrit ratio, quam quod ſancti Patres *Catholicæ Fidei*, *Nicænorumque* dogmatum Teſtes ſint inconcuſſi, vindices acerrimi: Qui Fidem ab Apoſtolis traditam, a majoribus acceptam, ad nos uſque propagarunt, acceptam, vita, voce, etiam et ſanguine ſuo confirmarunt, invictiſque Argumentis contra omnia *Hæreticorum* molimina ſartam tectam conſervârunt; quique nullis Sophiſmatibus flecti queant, ut in *Unitariorum* Cauſam Teſtimonium dicant. Hinc illæ *lachrymæ!* Hæc Fundi calamitas. Adeo ut de *Antiquitate* Eccleſiaſtica dici poteſt quod de *Ratione* alicubi habet *Malmsburienſis* Philoſophus: Ubicunque *Ratio* Homini repugnat, Hominem ipſi *Rationi* repugnaturum. *Cave* Epiſt. Apologet. p. 17. Conf. p. 23.

[f] Prefatory Diſc. ſ. xi. p. 35.

Oſtervald

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Oſtervald to give ſome Colour to his Invectives: But neither of them will bear him out in any ſuch general Aſperſions upon their whole Body. And what if *Divines* ordinarily, (as *Civilians* alſo) fall ſhort of *Grotius* and *Pufendorf*; or what if they do not follow the ſame laboured *Method* (any more than the *Sermon on the Mount* did) yet their Diſcourſes may be *very inſtructive*, and the more ſo for their artleſs Simplicity, being better adapted to the Capacities of common Hearers. There are many *inſtructive* ways of inculcating *moral* Precepts; and it is by no means ſerving Morality, to diſparage all others for the ſake of one which a Man chuſes to be fond of, perhaps as thinking it *his own*. It is natural enough for any Perſon to applaud his own Taſte, and to prefer his own Way: But ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that there is more of human Infirmity, than there is of Equity or Juſtice in it. *Antients* ought to have their due Praiſes, as well as *Moderns*; and *Divines* as well as *Civilians*: And it is not fair Dealing to monopolize Eſteem, or to affect to draw all into one Channel, where a Man has placed himſelf to receive it, diſregarding his Neighbours.

It is very true, what This Gentleman ſays, that it *was not any of the Eccleſiaſticks*, or *Profeſſors of Divinity*[z], who drew up that *vaſt Syſtem* of Morality which *Grotius* is ſo juſtly famed for. It was a Work proper for ſo large

[z] Prefatory Diſcourſe, p. 36.

a *Genius*,

a *Genius*, and ſo accompliſhed a *Civilian* and *Stateſman*. Eccleſiaſticks, I am confident, are ſo far from envying Him the great Honour, which he thereby acquired, without ſeeking it, that they would be heartily glad if every other Writer of his Profeſſion were *like* Him, and *equal* to him, in Learning, Candor, Capacity, Gravity, Sincerity. This Gentleman does not make a juſt Report, when He ſays, that *The Eccleſiaſticks, inſtead of returning Thanks to* Grotius, for his excellent Work, *every where declared againſt him*, and that *many even Proteſtant Divines laboured to cry it down* [a]. He ſhould have been content to ſay, that the *Romaniſts* condemned it [b], while the *Proteſtants* in general, *Divines* and others, juſtly eſteemed it, and the *reformed* Univerſities paid ſuitable Regards to it [c]. It was not a *Divine* but a *Civilian* [d], who firſt appeared againſt it: And why may I not add, that *Divines* at this Day, probably, have a greater Eſteem of the *Work*, and a truer Value for it, than the laſt *Civilian* who tranſlated it, and who has animadverted ſometimes too *freely* upon it. Who

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[a] Prefatory Diſc. p. 36.

[b] Nec quiſquam quam diu vixit *Grotius*, contra eos (*Grotii* Libros) quicquam movere auſus eſt, niſi quod tertio ab eo Tempore quo prodierunt Anno, 1627, die quarto Februarii, ab *Inquiſitionis* quod *Romæ* eſt officio, nota Hæreſeos inureretur.

Buddei Hiſtor. Jur. Naturalis, p. 31, 32.

Conf. Bayle Diction. in *Grotius*. Note O.

[c] Creſcere tum in dies exiſtimatio de utilitatibus librorum *Grotii*; ut in *Academiis* viri docti eoſdem prælegere et interpretari conſultum ducerent. *Buddeus* ibid. p. 39. Conf. *Bayle* in Note °.

[d] Johannes a Felden, A. D. 1653.

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is it that has told the World, that the incomparable *Grotius* was *not throughly acquainted with the Art of thinking juſtly*? Is it not This very Gentleman [e] detracting from *Grotius*, to compliment the Author of the *Parrhaſiana*, who had ſaid the ſame Thing before [f]. It was *Grotius*'s Misfortune, it ſeems, to fall half a Century ſhort, in the Art of *juſt thinking*. But what Pains will not ſome Men take to draw Reputation to their own Apartments: Firſt, diſparaging *Antients* in compariſon of *Moderns*, to bring it ſo much *nearer* towards *Themſelves*; next, excluding *Divines* at large, to fix it among *Criticks*, or *Civilians*; then highly extolling two or three very *eminent* Perſonages, to beat off *Rivals*, and as it were to devolve all Repute upon them for a Seaſon; Laſtly, giving broad Intimations, that there are yet *greater* Men than Thoſe, as to *true Reaſoning*, (a prime Excellency) and the Perfection of *juſt Thinking*: And who ſhould theſe at length be, but the ſame that ſit as *Judges* upon *Them*, as upon all the reſt? Various are the Windings and Turnings of *Self-love*, and its Illuſions many: But I forbear. Theſe Reflections, if not capable of the ſtricteſt Proof, yet have moſt undoubtedly greater Appearances of Truth [g], than moſt of thoſe unworthy *Aſperſions* caſt upon the primitive *Fathers*.

After

[e] Preſatory Diſcourſe, p. 79.

[f] *Le Clerc*'s Parrhaſiana. p. 247, 248. Engl. Edit.

[g] Qui ita omnia reprehendunt, et *inveteratæ exiſtimationis* Auctores tam lubenter explodunt, plerumque id agunt ut *Soli* habeantur laude digni: vel certe ad *ſuum judicium*, quaſi ab erro-

ribus

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After all, we take not upon us, to acquit the *Fathers* of all kinds of Miſtakes or of human *Frailties*; for we very well know that they were *Men*, tho' excellent Men. All we deſire is, that no *Errors* may be imputed more than belong to them, nor that thoſe which they really gave into, be aggravated beyond Reaſon; nor that That wherein any of them *ſingly* offended, be collectively thrown upon them all. In ſhort, we deſire no *Favour* in their Behalf, but *Truth*, *Juſtice*, *Equity*, *Candour*, and *Humanity*, which are *due* to all Men, living or dead; and much more to Perſons of ſuch exemplary Virtues, and ſo exalted a Character in the Churches of Chriſt[h]. I ſhall only add, that had the *Fathers*, ſeveral of them, really fallen into as many Errors of Doctrine, as ſome would make us believe they did, yet our two main Poſitions would ſtand firm as before: *viz.* 1. That from the Writings of the *Fathers*, taken with other collateral Evidences, we may competently learn as to Matter of *Fact*[i], what was the *general Senſe* of the Three

ribus humanis immune, omnia *aliena* voluit conformata; quod arrogantiæ eſt haud vulgaris. *Periz.* in Q. Curt. vindicat. p. 192.

[h] Recte igitur noſtri docent, æquitatis Legem poſtulare, ut quos propter multa præclare dicta non æquamus *Scriptoræ*, eoſdem propter nævos et errores nonnullos protinus non rejiciamus. Circumtulerunt et ipſi carnem et ſanguinem; faſſi ſunt, ſe humanæ infirmitati obnoxios: Perhumane igitur tractandi ſunt, non proterve fugillandi. *Rivet.* Tractat. de Patr. Autoritat. c. x. p. 65.

[i] A proper Diſtinction ſhould be made (as I before hinted) between the *Reaſonings* of the Fathers and their *Teſtimonies* as to Fact.

Of

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firſt Centuries, in the *important* Articles of Faith [k]. 2. That the hiſtorical Knowledge of the *Fact* ſo teſtified, may be of very great uſe to us, for the interpreting of Scripture, ſo far as concerns Thoſe Articles, and for guarding the Word of God againſt any novel and dangerous Miſconſtructions.

VI. It has been ſometimes objected, that the Fathers were but very indifferent *Criticks* upon Scripture, and that they frequently miſ-interpreted particular Texts. A learned Writer has been at the Pains to draw up a moderate *Octavo*, full of *ſuppoſed* Examples of that kind, beginning with *Geneſis*, and deſcending regularly through the Scripture, almoſt as far as the *Revelations* [l]. He had a wide Field to range in, four or five whole Centuries, and more. And if any thing amiſs, by way of Comment, happened to drop from any *Father*, in all that Time, perhaps in ſome very haſty Compoſition, ſome *extempore* Homily, or the like, that muſt be brought in to ſwell the Account: And whatſoever any one *ſingly* has of-

Of which ſee *Dodwell.* Diſſert. in *Iren.* i. ſ. xliii. p. 77. *&c.* Biſhop *Smalbroke* Vindicat. of Miracles, *&c.* Vol. i. p. 123.

[k] Nihil dubii eſſe poſſit, quin per *duo* ſaltem aut *tria* ab Apoſtolis ſecula, Eccleſia in primitivo ſuo vigore, atque, ut ita loquar, *Virginitate* permanſerit: Eodem nimirum ſtatu quo ab ipſis Apoſtolis relicta fuit; niſi quod novæ ſubinde *Hæreſes* iſtis etiam diebus erumperent, quibus Eccleſia *exercitata* fuit, minime *corrupta*: Haud magis ſcilicet quam Eccleſia *Apoſtolica* ab iſtis *Hæreſibus* depravata fuit quæ Apoſtolis adhuc ſuperſtitibus emergebant; vix citius enim exortæ ſunt quam ab Eccleſia rejectæ. *Bevereg.* Cod. Can. vindic. in Proœm. ſ. vii.

[l] *Whitby* Diſſert. de Script Interpret.

fended

fended in a *ſingle* Place (ſomewhere elſe perhaps making us amends for it) He is to bear the Odium of it; and not only He, but all his Predeceſſors, and Succeſſors for ſo many Centuries, all that paſs under the Name of *Fathers*: For the Deſign is to ſhew, that the *Fathers* in general were very weak Men. It would be tedious to enter into a detail of the Texts, ſaid to be miſinterpreted. Therefore I ſhall only obſerve, as follows, upon the Examination I have made. 1. That ſome of the Interpretations found fault with, are *true* and *juſt* Interpretations, blamed without Reaſon, and brought in for Shew, or to make Bulk. 2. Several others are *doubtful*, and may claim candid Allowances. 3. Some are *miſreported*, or repreſented otherwiſe than the good *Fathers* intended. 4. Moſt of the blameable ones are of the *Allegorical* kind: And They very often are not ſo properly *Interpretations* (For the Fathers generally admitted a *literal* Interpretation beſides, of the ſame Texts) as a kind of moral or ſpiritual *Uſes* or *Improvements* raiſed upon the Texts, for the practical Edification of the People. The Deſign ſeems to have been much the ſame (only employed upon a nobler Subject) with what ſeveral pious Perſons have attempted, in endeavouring to turn every common Incident of Life, every thing they hear, read, or ſee to ſome ſpiritual Improvement, by appoſite Reflections or Meditations. The Reader may find a Specimen of ſuch *ſpiritual Exerciſes* as I ſpeak of, in the very

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very pious and ingenious Mr. *Boyle*, in his Treatise intituled, *Occasional Reflections upon several Subjects*. Such a kind of *Exercise* I take many of those *Allegorical* Comments (Those especially of the *Tropological* kind) to have been. They were well meant, and had their Use, tho' often carried too far; But, in strictness, they were not *Interpretations* of Scripture, but rather pious Meditations upon Scripture. I am sensible that *some* of them were intended as *Interpretations*: But, in the general, and for the most part, I conceive, they were rather what I have said. 5. But supposing that the Fathers sometimes, or often mistook in their Interpretations of Scripture (in such Texts more especially upon which no *fundamental* Doctrine of the Church depended, nor perhaps was concerned in) what can be supposed to follow from such a Concession? Nothing, so far as I can yet apprehend, that will at all affect our present Question. It may be allowed, and cannot indeed justly be denied, that *modern* Criticks and Divines, of the first Rank, having the Light of the *Fathers* before them, and greater Skill in the *Languages*, and many additional Helps which the Fathers wanted, are better *Textuaries*, upon the whole [m], than the ablest of the *Antients* were, or than all the *Fathers*

[m] Eruditionem Patribus, aut sagacitatem in sequelis colligendis, potiorem nullam asserimus quam coævis aliis eorundum Temporum Scriptoribus: sed nec potiorem illis Antiquis *in universum*, quam junioribus nostris. Quin bonas Literas studiosius excultas a nuperis nostris Ecclesiæ Reformatoribus libenter agnoscimus: Nec in *Philosophia* modo, sed in *Antiquitate*, in ipsis etiam

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Fathers together, becauſe they contain them, in a manner, or the beſt Things in them, with additional Improvements. But admitting all This, it concludes nothing againſt the *Uſe* or *Value* of the Antients, but *ſuppoſes it* all the time. Beſides, the Streſs is not laid upon any *critical* Acumen of the *Fathers* in interpreting every particular Text, but upon their Faithfulneſs in relating what was the *Doctrine* of the *Church*, as to the *prime* Things, in their Times, or before, and upon their Interpretation of ſome remarkable and leading Texts (ſuch for inſtance, as *John* i. 1.) upon which chiefly the fundamental Doctrines were conceived to reſt. From whence it is manifeſt, that the learned Collector of *erroneous* Comments (ſuppoſing his Repreſentations juſt, which they often are not) has ſhot wide of the Mark: And indeed he was ſenſible of it[n]; however notwithſtanding he thought fit to publiſh his Collection. He acknowledges our Meaning to

am *Linguis* illorum Temporum vernaculis: Sed et *preſſiorem* noſtris et *ſolidiorem* argumentandi Methodum agnoſcimus quæm ſit alia illa laxior, et ſophiſtica, et declamatoria, quæ non apud *Patres* duntaxat, ſed et alios eorundem Temporum Scriptores erat receptiſſima. Itaque, exceptis illis quæ ad *Fidem* pertinent, aut quæ ad propriorum Temporum *Hiſtoriam*; in aliis facile ferimus diſſentientes, judicanteſque de eorum ratiociniis juniores. Sed vero in coævis Scriptoribus intelligunt *coævi* etiam *idiotæ*, quæ lateant *remotiorum* ſeculorum etiam eruditiſſimos. *Dodwell, Diſſert. in Iren.* in Prefat. ſ. 15.

[n] Nec hoc in animum induxiſſe hos Patrum Antiſtites exiſtimo (quod eorum verba præ ſe ferunt) nempè ſacras Scripturas interpretandas eſſe juxta *Senſum quem Patres de iis ſpeciatim, verbiſque conceptis exhibuerunt*, quemque nos in hoc opere protulimus; ſed tantum eas interpretandas eſſe juxta *Doctrinam quam exiſtimant*.

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be no more than This, that Scripture be interpreted by the *general Doctrine* of the Antient Church, in the prime Things [p]. But then he runs on to call it *impoſing* a Senſe upon Scripture, inſtead of *taking* one from it; making the *Fathers* ſpeak for *Chriſt*, inſtead of permitting *Chriſt* to ſpeak for *Himſelf*, and the like. Now indeed, if every Man that ſhould undertake to interpret Scripture out of his own Head, were *infallibly* certain to make *Chriſt* ſpeak for *Himſelf*, and were in no manner of Danger of *impoſing* a Senſe upon Him, there would be ſome Weight in ſuch Reaſoning; But did *Socinus*, did *Arius*, did *Sabellius*, did *Valentinus*, or an hundred more, ſucceed ſo well in that way, that That ſhould be recommended as the only *ſafe* way of delivering the Mind of Chriſt? It is granted on all Hands, that Scripture ſhould ſpeak its *own* Senſe, and that no *foreign* Senſe ought to be *impoſed* upon it: But then one of the beſt Rules we can think of to ſecure to it its *own* Senſe,

exiſtimant apud primævos Patres obtinuiſſe. Quod quidem non eſt ſenſum Scripturæ ex verbis Scripturæ accipere, ſed ſenſum Patrum Scripturis adferre, &c. *Whitby. Differt.* Præf. p. 19.

[p] This Matter is very clearly and accurately expreſſed by Mr. *Thorndike*.

Eſt enim magnopere advertendum, cum definiendam ex *Traditione Eccleſiæ* Scripturæ Sententiam dico, non hoc me velle quaſi teneri poſſit ſenſus Scripturæ Traditione (Quis enim putet Scripturarum ſcientiam, omni literarum genere conſtantem, Traditione teneri poſſe?) ſed quod recuſandum ſit, tanquam a vero Scripturæ Senſu alienum, quicquid *in Traditionem incurrit*: Quod eſt dicere, intra *Fines Traditionis* continendam eſſe Interpretationem Scripturæ. *Thorndike* de ration. Fin. contr. p. 147.

Compare *Sherlock*. Socin. contr. p. 78.

and

and to exclude all *foreign* Senſes, is to keep to the *Old Senſe* (while the Words will bear it, much more if they require it) which obtained from the Beginning, among the *Churches* favoured in a very particular manner by the illuſtrious Preſence of the Spirit of God [9]. CHAP. VII.

VII. It has been ſometimes objected, that there have been *Fathers* againſt *Fathers*, Councils againſt Councils, and warm Conteſts amongſt the *Antient* Doctors Themſelves; particularly about the Time for obſerving *Eaſter*, and about *Heretical* Baptiſms. All which we allow, but further plead, that the more they differed in *Rituals*, or Matters of *Diſcipline* (Things of ſlighter Concern) the more Regard is to be paid to them in the greater Matters wherein they all agreed. For if They would not ſuffer any *Innovation*, or the *Appearance* of any, even in the ſmaller Matters, but were exceeding jealous of every Thing that looked *new*, and were prepared to oppoſe any Perſon

[9] The very judicious and learned *Ger. Voſſius* ſpeaks excellently well on this Head.

Ante omnia quidem ſcrutandum, quid Deus dicat in *verbo ſuo*: Sed ne perperam illud interpretemur, quando omnes ad errorem ſumus proclives, attendere etiam debemus, non modo quid unus et alter, ſed omnino quid *conſtanter* docuerit *Eccleſia Dei*. Quantopere enim repugnat *Perſpicuitati* Scripturæ, ſi ita exaratæ credantur, ut ab Apoſtolorum exceſſu, ne in *præcipuis* quidem Fidei Capitibus, ipſi eas Eccleſiarum doctiſſimi ceperint Antiſtites! Quantum item adverſetur *Bonitati* Dei et *Amori* erga nos, ſi per tot ſecula, ad Scripturarum Intelligentiam deſuiſſe ſtatuamus *Spiritum Dei*, viris licet pietate et Sanctimonia præcellentibus, Eccleſiæque ſemper commendatiſſimis, atque eo melioribus quo Apoſtolicis propiores erant Temporibus. *Voſſ. in Epiſt. ad Forbeſ.* præfix. *Hiſtor. Inſtruct.* A. D. 1645.

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or Perſons, how conſiderable ſoever in Station, Age, or Dignity, rather than admit a *Novelty*; how can we imagine that they ſhould all ſo unanimouſly agree in the Doctrine of our Lord's *Divinity*, if it were not *old* Doctrine, the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints? Their *Differences* in inferior Matters ſerve to ſtrengthen the Plea drawn from their *Unanimity* in This, and ſo are an Argument on our Side, rather than any Objection againſt us[r].

VIII. It has been objected[s], that our VIth Article condemns the Method of interpreting Scripture by *Antiquity*, or, at leaſt, *ſuperſedes* it; becauſe it ſays: HOLY SCRIPTURE CONTAINETH ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO SALVATION; SO THAT WHATSOEVER IS NOT READ THEREIN, NOR MAY BE PROVED THEREBY, IS NOT TO BE REQUIRED OF ANY MAN, THAT IT SHOULD BE BELIEVED AS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH, OR NECESSARY TO SALVATION. The Article ſays nothing but what is perfectly right, and perfectly conſiſtent with all we have been

[r] Daillè himſelf argues in like manner, as we here do. "As for thoſe *Differences* in *Opinion* which are ſometimes "found amongſt them, touching ſome certain Points of Religi- "on, ſome whereof we have formerly ſet down; theſe Things "are ſo far from taking off any Thing from the *Weight* of their "Teſtimonies, as that, on the contrary, they add rather very "much to the ſame. For this muſt acquit their *conſenting*, of all "Suſpicion that ſome perſons might have, that it proceeded "from ſome *Combination*, or ſome Correſpondence and mutual "Intelligence." *Daillè*, Uſe of the Fathers, Part ii. c. 6. p. 186. Conf. *Bevereg.* Cod. Can. Vindicat. in Procem. § 5.

[s] Whitby Differt. p. 4.

pleading

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pleading for. We allow no Doctrine as *neceſſary*, which ſtands only on *Fathers*, or on *Tradition*, oral or written: We admit none for ſuch, but what is *contained* in Scripture, and *proved* by Scripture, *rightly* interpreted. And we know of no Way more ſafe in *Neceſſaries*, to preſerve the *right* Interpretation, than to take the *Antients* along with us[t]. We think it a good Method to ſecure our *Rule of Faith* againſt Impoſtures of all Kinds; whether of *Enthuſiaſm*, or falſe *Criticiſm*, or *conceited* Reaſon, or *oral* Tradition, or the aſſuming Dictates of an *infallible* Chair. If we thus preſerve the *true* Senſe of Scripture, and upon That Senſe build our Faith, we then build upon Scripture *only*; for the *Senſe* of Scripture is Scripture[u]. Suppoſe a Man were to

[t] So the great *Caſaubon*, ſpeaking both for *himſelf* and for the *Church* of *England*; and at the ſame time for *Melanchon*, and *Calvin* alſo.

Opto cum *Melanchone* et *Eccleſia Anglicana*, per canalem *Antiquitatis* deduci ad nos dogmata Fidei, e Fonte ſacræ *Scripturæ* derivata. Alioquin quis futurus eſt novandi Finis? ——Etſi omnis mea voluptas eſt et ſola, verſari in Lectione ſacræ *Scripturæ*, nullam tamen inde me hauſiſſe *propriam* ſententiam, nullam habere, neque unquam, σὺν θεῷ ἰδρεῖν, eſſe habiturum. Magni *Calvini* hæc olim fuit mens, cum ſcriberet præfationem ſuam in Commentarium Epiſtolæ ad *Romanos*; non debere nos ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις, a conſenſu Eccleſiæ recedere. A. D. 1611. *Caſaub. Epiſt.* 744. *Dan. Heinſio* p. 434. Edit. 3tia *Roterodami*.

[u] "We reverently receive the *unanimous* Tradition or Doc-
" trine of the Church in all Ages, which determines the *Mean-*
" *ing* of the holy Scripture, and makes it more clear and un-
" queſtionable in any Point of *Faith*, wherein we can find it
" hath declared its *Senſe*. For, we look upon this *Tradition* as
" nothing elſe but the *Scripture unfolded*: Not a *new* Thing
" which is not in the Scripture, but the *Scripture explained* and
" made more evident. Dr. (afterward Biſhop) *Patrick's Diſ-*
" *courſe about Tradition*, p. 18. Printed A. D. 1683.

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prove his *legal* Title to an Eſtate; He appeals to the *Laws*: The true Senſe and Meaning of the Laws muſt be proved by the beſt Rules of Interpretation; but, after all, it is the *Law* that gives the Title, and That *only*. In like manner, after uſing all proper Means to come at the *Senſe* of Scripture (which is Scripture) it is That, and That only which we *ground* our Faith upon, and *prove* our Faith by. We alledge not Fathers as *Grounds*, or *Principles*, or *Foundations* of our Faith, but as Witneſſes, and as Interpreters, and faithful Conveyers.

That the Church of *England* has a very particular regard to *Antiquity*, may ſufficiently appear from a *Canon* ſet forth in the ſame Year when our Articles were firſt perfected and authorized by Act of Parliament, namely, in the Year 1571. By that *Canon* it is provided, "That Preachers ſhall not preſume to "deliver any thing from the Pulpit, as of Mo"ment, to be *religiouſly* obſerved and believ"ed by the People, but that which is agree"able to the Doctrine of the old or new Teſta"ment, and collected out of the ſame Doc"trine by the *Catholick* Fathers and the Bi"ſhops of the *Antient* Church[y]." A wiſe Regulation, formed with exquiſite Judgment, and worded with the exacteſt Caution. The

[y] Imprimis vero videbunt [Concionatores] ne quid unquam doceant pro concione, quod a populo religioſe teneri et credi velint, niſi quod conſentaneum ſit Doctrinæ veteris aut novi Teſtamenti, quodque ex illa ipſa Doctrina Catholici Patres et veteres Epiſcopi collegerint. *Sparrow Collect.* p. 238.

Canon does not order, that they ſhall teach *whatever had been taught* by Fathers; No, That would have been ſetting up a *new* Rule of Faith: Neither does it ſay, that They ſhall teach *whatſoever* the Fathers had *collected from Scripture*; No, That would have been making them *infallible* Interpreters, or infallible *Reaſoners*: The *Doctrine* muſt be found firſt in *Scripture*; only to be the more ſecure that we have found it there, the *Fathers* are to be called in, to be as it were conſtant Checks upon the Preſumption or Wantonneſs of *private* Interpretation. But then again, as to *private* Interpretation, there is *Liberty* enough allowed to it. Preachers are not forbidden to interpret This or That Text, or hundreds of Texts, differently from what the *Fathers* have done; provided ſtill they keep within the *Analogy* of *Faith*, and preſume not to raiſe any *new* Doctrine: Neither are they altogether reſtrained from teaching any thing *new*, provided it be offered as *Opinion* only, or an *inferior* Truth, and not preſſed as *neceſſary* upon the People. For it was thought, that there could be no *neceſſary* Article of Faith or Doctrine now drawn from *Scripture*, but what the *Antients* had drawn out before, from the ſame Scripture: To ſay otherwiſe, would imply that the Antients had failed univerſally in *Neceſſaries*, which is morally abſurd.

From this Account it may appear, that the Church of *England* is exactly in the ſame Sentiments which I have been pleading for. And

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And indeed, if there be any Church now in the World, which truly reverences Antiquity, and pays a proper Regard to it, it is this Church [w]. The *Romaniſts* talk of *Antiquity*, while we obſerve and follow it. For, with Them, both Scripture and Fathers, are, as to the *Senſe*, under the Correction and Controul of the *preſent* Church [x]: With us, the preſent Church ſays nothing, but under the Direction of *Scripture* and *Antiquity* taken together, one as the *Rule*, and the other as

[w] Eccleſia *Anglicana* hoc ſe univerſo Orbi charactere dignoſcendum, hoc æquæ Poſteritati æſtimandum proponit, quod in controverſiis Fidei aut Praxeos decernendis, illud firmum ratumque ſemper habuerit (et huic baſi Reformationem *Britannicam* niti voluerit) ut Scripturis *Primæ*, dein primorum ſæculorum Epiſcopis, Martyribus, Scriptoribus Eccleſiaſticis *ſecundæ* deſerantur. *Hammond contr. Blondell.* in prælim. c. xiv. ſ. 13.

Rex cum Eccleſia Anglicana pronuntiat, eam demum ſe Doctrinam pro *vera* ſimul et *neceſſaria* ad ſalutem agnoſcere, quæ e Fonte *Sacræ Scripturæ* manans, per Conſenſum *veteris Eccleſiæ*, ceu per Canalem, ad hæc Tempora fuerit derivata. *Caſaubon Epiſt. ad Perron.* 838. p. 493. A. D. 1612.

Quod ſi me conjectura non fallit, Totius Reformationis pars integerrima eſt in *Anglia*, ubi cum ſtudio *Veritatis*, viget ſtudium *Antiquitatis*. *Idem ad Salmaſ.* Epiſt. 847. p. 489. A. D. 1612.

[x] Vid. *Rivet Tractat. de Patr. Authoritate*, c. vii. p. 40, &c. *Patrick* on Tradition, p. 41. *Stillingfleet's* rational Account, Part i. c. v. p. 80, &c.

N. B. In the 14th Article of the Creed of Pope *Pius* IV. The Words run thus. *I do receive the holy Scriptures in the ſame Senſe that Holy Mother Church doth, and always hath—neither will I receive and interpret them otherwiſe than according to the unanimous Conſent of the Fathers.* Here are two *contradictory* Things blended together, the Senſe of their *preſent Church*, and the *unanimous Conſent of Fathers*: which are no more to be reconciled, than Light and Darkneſs; except it be by making *Antiquity* as much a *Lesbian* Rule, as they make the *Scripture*. I follow the Copy of that Creed given in *Latin* and *Engliſh* at the End of Dr. *Hickes's* Letters, publiſhed A. D. 1705.

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the *Pattern* or *Interpreter*. Among Them, the *preſent* Church ſpeaks by *Scripture* and *Fathers*: With us, *Scripture* and *Fathers* ſpeak by the Church. I have before thrown in ſome Teſtimonies of the high Regard which our Church pays to *Antiquity*: And if the Reader deſires more of like kind, He may pleaſe to conſult ſuch as have collected them, ſome of which I refer to at the Bottom of the Page [y].

IX. It may ſtill be objected, that the appealing to *Antiquity* may be both fruitleſs, and endleſs, and can never decide Differences, or ſilence Diſputes, becauſe all Parties almoſt have or may put in their Claim to it; and as it will be hard to decide among the ſeveral Claimants, ſo the whole will terminate in Confuſion [z]: Therefore the ſhorteſt and beſt Method is, to throw off *Antiquity*, and to abide by Scripture alone. This Objection does, in ſome meaſure, fall in with others be-

[y] *Scrivener* adv. Dallæum. Par. i. c. 9. p. 57, &c.
Dr. *Puller*'s Moderation of the Church of *England*, p. 80, &c.
Bull. Apolog. pro Harmon. ſ. 1. p. 634.
Grabe, *Spicileg.* Vol. I. in Præfatione.
Saywell, Præfat. Apologet. præfix. Launoii. Epiſt. A. D. 1689.

" It is a *Calumny*, to affirm that the Church of *England* re-
" jects all *Tradition*: And I hope, none of her Children are ſo
" ignorant, as when They hear That Word, to imagine They
" muſt riſe up and oppoſe it. No, The Scripture it ſelf is a
" *Tradition*; and we admit all other *Traditions* which are ſubor-
" dinate and agreeable to That; together with all Thoſe Things
" which can be proved to be *Apoſtolical*, by the *general* Teſtimony
" of the Church in all Ages. *Patrick* on Tradition, p. 48.

[z] Whitby Diſſertat. Præf. p. 28, 75, 80.

fore

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fore mentioned: But because it contains, in a manner, the Sum and Substance of several, I shall return a distinct Answer to it, in so many Particulars.

1. I would observe, that since all Parties almost have put in their Claim to *Antiquity*, it is a certain Sign that They have a *Value* and *Esteem* for it, and think it of some Force. They appeal to *Scripture* also, because it is of weight. One has a *Plea* from it, and Another a *Pretence*. Whatever is worth the *having* where it is to be had, will be also thought worth the *counterfeiting*, where it is not. Therefore, we may expect, in such Cases, counterfeit Scripture and counterfeit Antiquity, to give colour to *false* Claims, as well as genuine Scripture and genuine *Antiquity*, to support *true* ones. All this shews, that it is generally thought a great Advantage to have *Antiquity* on one's Side, and as great a Disadvantage to any Cause, to want it. Men would never contend about it, were it worthless, or insignificant: They would not take Pains to adulterate the Coin, if the Coin it self were not *valuable*. Therefore let us not too hastily part with any Thing, which all Parties either openly speak well of, or secretly covet and admire[1].

2. As-

[1] It is remarkable of *Socinus* who contemn'd *Tradition* and all the *Antients*, undertaking to coin a *new* Religion from Scripture *alone*; I say, it is remarkable of Him, that when he found that his Disciples would not submit to *worship* Christ, after all He could bring from *Scripture* to perswade Them to it, He reminded

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2. As to *deciding* Differences, or *ſilencing* Diſputes, it is granted that *Antiquity* will not always be *effectual*, neither will *Scripture*; neither indeed will any Thing but what would be effectual to make all Men *humble* and *modeſt*, *wiſe* and *good*. That ſo many ſeveral *Sects* and *Parties* differ ſo widely from each other, and from the Truth, is not generally owing to this, that their *different Interpretations* of Scripture have led them into different Opinions in Religion, but their *different Opinions* have led them into *different Interpretations*. All muſt of neceſſity pretend *Colour*, at leaſt, from Scripture, (if they would not be taken for Madmen, or Infidels) and if *true* Interpretation will not anſwer the Purpoſe, *falſe* muſt come up of courſe. So, it is in vain to caſt about for any Rules of Interpretation, as *certain Remedies* for the *healing* Differences, or *ending* all Diſputes: The Diſeaſe lies deeper, and is too ſtubborn for human Means. There is no *infallible* Preſervative, no *irreſiſtible* Expedient againſt *Hereſy*, any more than againſt any other *Vices*: Neither ought there to be any; for then a *right Belief* would be no matter of *Choice*, nor *Faith* any longer a *Virtue*, as God deſigned it ſhould be. We pretend not therefore to *infallible* Cures by

minded them of the *antient* and *univerſal* Practice of *Saints* and *Martyrs*, as an Argument to prove that ſuch was the *Senſe* of Scripture. *Quia nimis aperte in ſanctis Literis ea illi tribui animadvertunt, &c.* [Ad Matt. Radec. Epiſt. 3. p. 391.] An Argument which, if he had uniformly attended to it, ought to have given ſome Check to his moſt exorbitant Wantonneſs, and Self-ſufficiency in other Matters.

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any *Means* whatever. But tho' we cannot expect to work *Miracles* by the Help of *Antiquity* and *Scripture* together, (For *Heresies* there will be notwithstanding, and Scripture itself intimates there *must be* *) yet they are Both of them of very great Use, and may have their Effect, in a human way, among *reasonable* Men; which is sufficient. We are very sensible, that they who study to pervert *Scripture*, will pervert *Tradition* too, and will often turn Those Weapons against the Truth, which were intended only for Defence of it. That is an Inconvenience common to a thousand other Cases besides This: We must be content to bear with it, and to conduct as prudently as we can, under Direction from the Word of God. And when we have so done all that is proper, or required, and without Effect, the Appeal must lie to the *Common Reason* of Mankind; and there it must rest till the Cause comes to be heard before a higher Tribunal.

3. But tho' *Scripture* and *Antiquity* may Both of them be *resisted*, or Both *perverted*, and are not certainly *effectual*, nor intended to be so, yet Both together are of greater Force than Scripture *singly* can be; and That is reason sufficient for superadding *Antiquity*. Two Witnesses are better than one, tho' one be superior; and two Proofs of the same Thing (tho' one be as *primary*, and the other *secondary*) amount to more than either of them singly can do. Every additional Light con-

* 1 Cor. xi. 19.

tributes

tributes ſome Luſtre, and every acceſſional Weight helps to turn the Scale. A Man may be able to evade Scripture alone, who may not be able to evade both *Scripture* and *Antiquity*; or if He can evade Both, yet perhaps not ſo *eaſily*: Therefore, if the taking in *Antiquity* is of Service, as it reinforces *Truth*, and bears the harder upon *Error* [b], it is worth the urging, for the ſame reaſon as all kinds of Arguments, or Diſſuaſives againſt Sin and Wickedneſs, are to be urged in due Place.

4. Laſtly, I muſt obſerve, that there is no ſuch great Difficulty, as ſome Perſons may fancy, in diſtinguiſhing *falſe* Claims from *true*, or in pointing out among the ſeveral Claimants, where the *Right* lies. Men of ready Wit and Invention may draw up a Catalogue of innumerable Difficulties, taking in all ſuch as might poſſibly happen in *any* Caſe, and throwing them together, ſo as to make up one large and floating Idea of Difficulty, for the Reader to apply to *every* Caſe: But if one looks a little cloſer into any particular Inſtance, He will be ſurprized to find how *eaſy* it is, after all, to form a Judgment of it, and that not a hundred part perhaps of that general confuſe Idea of Difficulty does really belong to it. If a Man were inclined to hear what fine Harangues

[b] Quis vero non fateatur, *præſcriptione* ejuſmodi multum *firmari* Animos noſtros in *genuina* Scripturæ Interpretatione, *validius* quoque *munitiuſque* Hæreſes refelli? Quare hoc armorum genere ſemper pugnatum fuit a ſanctis Patribus: Qui præcipue quidem ſe tuentur *Scripturæ* Auctoritate, nec tamen prætereunt priorum Temporum Conſenſum. *Gerard. Voſſ. Epiſt. ad Forbeſ.*

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might be made upon the Uncertainty of the Reports of *Senſe*, how often, and how many ſeveral Ways, his Eyes or Ears, or other Senſes might deceive Him, (which may be illuſtrated with great Variety of Inſtances from *Hiſtory*, embelliſhed with all the Ornaments of Wit and Fancy) He might be apt, for ſome time, almoſt to miſtruſt his *Senſes*, and to take Life it ſelf for a *Dream*. But notwithſtanding all, when He comes to conſider *Uſe* and *Experience*, He will ſoon find, that his *Senſes* may, for the moſt part, be ſecurely truſted to, without Danger of Deception, and that it is ſcarce once in a thouſand Trials, that they lead Him into Error. The like may be ſaid, with regard to the ſtudied Harangues drawn up by ſome Writers, about the *Uncertainty* of all Tradition, and the *Obſcurity* of the *Fathers*, and the Danger of *Deception*: They amount only to looſe, general *Diſcourſe*, which may ſeem, at firſt, to have ſomething in it [c], but is ſoon confuted by *Uſe* and *Experience*, the ſafeſt *Criterion* to judge by. The Truth of what I ſay, may beſt appear by an Induction of Particulars; and therefore I ſhall next briefly run over the moſt obſervable Pretences to *Tradition*, antient and modern (ſuch as at preſent occur to me) that we may judge from the particular Inſtances how that Caſe ſtands.

[c] Legi Libros de *uſu Patrum*, et quidem ſæpius. Sed, neſcio quomodo, dum lego, aſſentior; cum poſui Libros, et mecum ipſe de nervis Argumentorum cœpi cogitare, aſſenſio omnis illa elabatur. *Zornius*, p. 665.

Beſides,

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Baſilides, of the firſt or ſecond Century, and his Partizans, pleaded *Antiquity*, and put in their Claim to *Tradition*, deriving it by one *Glaucias*, from St. *Peter* himſelf [d]. But the Vanity and Folly of the Plea was apparent at firſt ſight: And no ſenſible Man could ever think it at all reaſonable to give Credit to a wandring Tale, or to that obſcure *Glaucias*, rather than to *certain* Fact, (appearing in *Scripture*, and in the *Churches* founded by St. *Peter*) that St. *Peter*'s Doctrine was quite another Thing from what *Baſilides* had fathered upon him.

Valentinus, of the ſecond Century, and his Diſciples, pleaded *Antiquity* alſo, as well as *Scripture*, and fetched their Doctrine by one *Theodades*, as they ſaid, from the Apoſtle *Paul* [e]. A likely Matter! That *Theodades*, whoever he was, ſhould know more of St. *Paul*'s Mind, than all the Churches founded by that bleſſed Apoſtle. The Sillineſs of ſuch a Plea betrayed it ſelf at once; and but to name it, was to *expoſe* it.

The *Marcionites*, along with the *Baſilidians* and *Valentinians*, pretended alſo to derive their *common* Doctrines down by Tradition from the Apoſtle *Matthias* [f]. But their Plea was mere Artifice and Pretence, and was effectually confuted by the ſtanding Doctrine of all the *Apoſtolical Churches*. By their *common Doctrines*,

[d] Clemens Alexandrin. Strom. vii. p. 898. Ed. Oxon.
[e] Clem. Alex. ibid.
[f] Clem. Alex. Strom. vii. p. 900. Conf. *Dodwell*, Diſſert. in Iren. i. p. 48.

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I mean ſuch as They all agreed in, as about the *Origin of Evil*, and the Denial of Chriſt's real *Humanity*, or the like.

The *Artemonians*, of the third Century, pretended *Tradition* for their Hereſy, from the Apoſtles themſelves, and by the *Apoſtolical* Churches g. Which was ſaying ſomething, had They been able to make out the Fact; But the Falſity of the Report was palpable, and a Child might ſee it. For they had contrived their Story ſo oddly, and brought it down ſo low, that beſides antient Records in great Numbers, there might be Thouſands of living Witneſſes, who could contradict it, and expoſe it as a ſhameful Impoſture.

The *Arians*, after Them, in the fourth Century, claimed *Tradition*, equally with the *Catholicks*, but not with equal Reaſon. They pretended to derive their Doctrine down by the *Fathers* that lived before them; particularly, by *Origen*, and *Theognoſtus*, and *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*: But *Athanaſius* eaſily detected the Iniquity of their Claim, and effectually confuted it h.

The *Macedonians* alſo, in their Turn, pleaded *Tradition* for their rejecting the Divinity of the *Holy Ghoſt*. But the great St. *Baſil* laid open the Falſity of their Pretences that way, and demonſtrated that *Tradition* was on the contrary ſide i. Afterwards, (A. D. 383.) when both They

g Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. v. c. 28.

h *Athanaſ.* de Decret. Synod. Nic. p. 230, &c. de Sententia Dionyſii, 243, &c.

i *Baſil* de Spiritu Sancto.

and the *Arians* were ſolemnly called upon, and aſked if they would admit the common Suffrage of the *Antients*, and be concluded by it; They ſhrunk, and would not ſtand the Teſt, chuſing rather to reſt the Iſſue of the Cauſe upon *logical* Diſputation [k], their uſual Refuge, and which They thought their ſafeſt Retreat. It ſeldom happens, but that Thoſe who make *falſe* Pretences to Antiquity, do by their own Conduct, (by their evading, or ſhifting when preſs'd, or ſome other as ſignificant Marks) betray their own Cauſe; inſomuch that a Stander-by, of ordinary Sagacity, may often, without entring into the Heart of the Diſpute, give a ſhrewd Conjecture how the Caſe ſtands. Having conſidered ſome of the moſt noted Inſtances of unjuſtifiable Claims among the *Antients*, let us next deſcend to *Moderns*, for farther Illuſtration of what we are upon.

The *Romaniſts* are great Pretenders to *Catholick Tradition*, or *primitive Antiquity*: And yet the *Fact* is ſo full and plain againſt them, that we can point out to them in every Age, when, and where, and how every *Corruption* almoſt commenced, and every *Innovation* crept in [l]: Or can prove, at leaſt, that it was not from

[k] Socrat. Eccleſ. Hiſtor. l. v. c. 10.
Sozom. E. Hiſt. l. vii. c. 12.
See my *ſecond Defence*, Præf. p. 13. *&c.*

[l] See more particularly Biſhop *Bull's Anſwer to the Biſhop of Meaux*; And *Biſhop Stillingfleet's Council of Trent examined and diſproved by Catholick Tradition*: A. D. 1688. And Dr. *Whitby's* Treatiſe of Tradition.

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the Beginning. And it gives Ground for Suſpicion, that they are themſelves conſcious of the Nullity of their Claim, when They decline fair Diſputation. They ſcreen themſelves under *modern* Infallibility, and take Sanctuary commonly in their *own* Authority, as *ſole* Judges of every thing, rather than reſt the Iſſue of the Cauſe upon a ſtrict and fair Enquiry into *antient* Fact. I may further add, that it can ſcarce be thought a very difficult Matter, to diſcern how *Antiquity* ſtands, as to That Controverſy, when a ſingle Writer of our own (our excellent Biſhop *Forbes*) was not afraid, tho' a very modeſt Man, to challenge them publickly upon a great many Articles, 27 in Number, and to give them ſix whole Centuries to look out in, only to produce any *one ſufficient Sentence* out of any *old Catholick Doctor* or *Father*, or *General Council*, that ſhould be found to declare *clearly* and *plainly* on their Side, in any of the ſaid Articles. He made the Challenge, and upon Trial was ſufficient to ſtand his Ground [m]. The like Challenges, with reſpect to the firſt three or four Centuries, have been offered by others [n], and may be eaſily maintained by any Man of compe-

[m] Fidem fecerint vel ſolius Magnæ Britanniæ veſtræ, vel etiam noſtræ, tot Theologi ſummi: Ante omnes illud Hominis *Flammei Furiæ*, Antiſtes *Sariſburienſis*, Quis enim e Conciliis vel Doctoribus, quotquot primis fuere annis ſexcentis, non tantùm ſi is modo, ſed doctius quoque, vel felicius impugnavit Adverſarios? Non deſuere quidem quibus hoc diſputandi genus minus probaretur, ſed preſſiſſimi etiam *Whitakeri*, judicio, *Timidiores* hi fuere quam neceſſe erat. *Ger. Voſſ. ad Forbes.*

[n] See Dr. *Hicks*'s Letters to a popiſh Prieſt, p. 188, 189.

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tent Learning, or Judgment [n]: so little Difficulty is there in tracing *Tradition*, or in distinguishing *Pretence* from *Reality*. Wherefore one can scarce forbear lamenting, that so able a Writer as *Daille*, should take the Pains he did to depretiate the *Use* and *Value* of the *Fathers*, only for fear the *Romanists* should take Advantage of them [o]. He wanted at that Time either the *Spirit*, or the *Penetration* of *Jewel*: Otherwise He might have considered, that the *Protestant* Cause could not desire any fairer or greater Advantage, than to join Issue upon the Point of genuine *Antiquity*, and to be concluded by it. Indeed, it seems, that He did perceive it afterwards, and made very good use of it, when *Years* and *Experience* had more enlarged his Views.

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The modern *Socinians*, tho' their way has been, for the most part, to reject *Antiquity*, or to undervalue it, (finding it run against them) have yet many of them, and of late more especially, thought it Policy to set up a Claim to *Tradition*, deducing it from the *Apostles*, by the *Ebionites* and *Nazaræans* (whom they ignorantly, or artfully confound) down as far as to the Days of *Justin Martyr*, where They are pleased to imagine a Break in the Descent, making Him the first *Innovator*. The Story is better laid, than That of their Predecessors the *Artemonians*, before mentioned. For They confine us within 50 Years from the Apostlo-

[n] See his *Epistle dedicatory* prefix'd to his *Right Use of the Fathers*. As also, his *Preface* to the same.

[o] Vid. *Scriverius in Præfat.*

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lical Age; and they know, that we have but *few* Records, within that Compaſs, to confute their Tale by. However, by laying all our Evidences together, and making the beſt of them, Means have been found to demonſtrate[q], ſo far as a Matter of Fact can be demonſtrated, the Falſity and Nullity of their pretended *Tradition*. And indeed, it muſt look very odd, at firſt Sight, to every conſidering Man, that a Tradition from the *Apoſtles* ſhould be brought down by *Ebionites*, Men condemned by all the *Apoſtolical* Churches; nay and by the *Apoſtles* themſelves, as may appear from what I have offered above.

There remain now only the modern *Arians* to be ſpoken to. Some of whom do with great *Aſſurance* lay Claim to *antient Tradition*; while others fluctuate and heſitate upon it, as upon a Point which They neither know how to abide by, nor how to give up. As to Thoſe who put on the greateſt *Aſſurance*, it is a ſtrong Preſumption of their Conſciouſneſs of ſomething wrong, That They are unwilling to acquieſce in the *Canonical* Scriptures, without ſuperadding another Goſpel to them, a *new* Book of *Conſtitutions*, ſpurious and interpolated Pieces of the *third*, *fourth* and *fifth* Centuries[r]: Which, whatever elſe they be, are undoubtedly no part of the Oracles of God. Another Circumſtance, which looks ſuſpicious, is, That

[q] *Bull Primitivæ et Apoſtolicæ Traditio.* per tot. *Moſheim* Vindic. Antiq. contr. Joan. Toland. *Stillingfleet* Vindic. of the Trin. c. 3. p. 15, *&c.*

[r] See Mr. *Turner* on the Apoſtolical Conſtitutions. Printed A. D. 1715.

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this pretended *Tradition* is confined within *two Centuries*. The Reaſon is, becauſe the Evidences afterwards come in too full and ſtrong to be eluded: Beſides that *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and *Tertullian*, who are Both within the Compaſs, but happen to ſpeak too broad and clear, are excluded from giving their Teſtimony[f]. And yet, after all, even Thoſe which are taken in, as *Juſtin*, *Irenæus*, *Athenagoras*, &c. furniſh out Evidence enough to confute the ill-contrived Claim, and to prove it a *Figment*.

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As to other more prudent and cautious Abettors of the ſame Cauſe, tho' they decline not Teſtimonies from the *Antients*, when any can be made to look favourable to That Side, yet They endeavour, more ways than one, to ſink the Value of *Antiquity*, and to leſſen the juſt Eſteem which we ought to have for it. The Teſtimonies of the *Antients* are depretiated under the low Name of bare *Illuſtrations*[g], becauſe they are not *Proofs* in the higheſt Senſe, as the *Scriptures* themſelves are. But there is a *Medium* between *Proofs* in that ſtrongeſt Senſe, and mere *Illuſtrations:* For ſubordinate Proofs of the Church's Doctrine from the Beginning, drawn from Church Writers, are *Proofs* of ſomething (tho' not *Foundations* of our Faith) Proofs in the moral Kind, *ſecond* only to Scripture[h], and ſuch as

[f] *Whiſton*, Primitive Chriſtianity revived, Vol. iv. p. 2. Compare *Grabe's* Inſtances of Defects, &c. p. 8, &c.

[g] *Clarke's* Script. Doctr. Introduct. p. 24. third Edit.

[h] See my firſt *Defence*, p. 453. Second Defence, p. 487, &c. alias p. 492, &c. See alſo above, p. 379.

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ought at leaſt to have a *Negative*, ſo far as concerns *Fundamentals*, in the Interpretation of Scripture.

Another Inſtance of the low Eſteem which Thoſe Gentlemen have of the *Fathers*, is ſeen in This, that while they quote Paſſages from Them, ſuch as They can moſt eaſily warp to their own *Hypotheſis*, yet they undertake not, ſo far as I have obſerved, to *reconcile* the other numerous Paſſages, or to make the *Fathers*, upon the whole, *conſiſtent* Evidences on their Side, as we do on ours: This, I ſay, is another preſumptive Argument that They are themſelves, in ſome meaſure, *conſcious* how precarious and unſupported their Claims to *Antiquity* are.

I may add, that ſome amongſt them have taken all poſſible Pains to *expoſe* the *Fathers* to the utmoſt[x], on purpoſe to render their Suffrage, in this Cauſe, *uſeleſs* and *inſignificant*; A plain ſign that they take them not for *Friends*, ſince they do not uſe them like Friends. From this ſingle Mark, a Man of ordinary Diſcernment may competently judge (without looking farther) whom the *Fathers* belong to, as *Solomon*, by a like Direction, knew whoſe was the *Child*.

Enough hath been ſaid to ſhew, that it is no ſuch very difficult Matter, as ſome would repreſent, to judge between the Claimants, or to diſtinguiſh the *rightful* Poſſeſſor from the falſe

[x] Dr. *Whitby*'s *Diſſertation*, [de Scripturæ Interpret.] is intirely on this Subject, and written with that View.

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Challenger. I believe, it is, at leaſt, as eaſy (generally ſpeaking) as it is to judge in a *Critical* way upon Texts: For That is what the *plaineſt* Texts imaginable muſt at length be brought to, if one has a ſubtile Adverſary to deal with, who has learned to play the whole Game. Much learning commonly will be ſpent on Both Sides, before the plaineſt Cauſe can be brought to a full Hearing, and argued quite through. I need but inſtance in the Rounds which *Artemonius* has led us, upon *John* i. 1, mentioned above. CHAP. VII.

X. There is one Objection more, which tho' ſufficiently obviated already, may yet perhaps deſerve to have ſomething more diſtinctly ſaid to it in this Place. It is pleaded, That Men ought to *judge for themſelves*, to make uſe of their *own Underſtandings*, and to admit no *human Authorities*. I allow the Plea: But, I preſume, it is not hereby meant, that we ſhould receive no *human* Explications of Texts, for then we muſt receive none at all. If I interpret Scripture for my ſelf, my Explication is *human* to me; or elſe, how it ſhould become *human* to others who may take it of me, I do not ſee. No doubt but *Socinus*'s, or *Crellius*'s, or *Enjedine*'s Explications were *human*, as it is certain that many of them were falſe. And therefore They that talk in

[y] *Le Clerc* very well obſerves, that, "to Men governed by their "Paſſions, and concerned of their Intereſts, the moſt evident "Things in the World are *obſcure*; and that there is no *Law* ſo "cleaf, but a Wrangler may raiſe a thouſand Difficulties about it. [y] *Le Clerc*, Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 172.

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the general against all *human* Explications, seeth not to consider what They say, or They forget Themselves to be *Men*.

As to *Authority*, in a strict and proper Sense, I do not know that the *Fathers* have any over us. They are all dead Men. Therefore we urge not their *Authority*, but their *Testimony*, their *Suffrage*, their *Judgment*, as carrying great Force of *Reason* with it; and *Reason* we should all submit to *. Taking them in here, as *Lights* or *Helps*, is doing what is *reasonable*, and using our *own Understanding* in the best Manner, and to the best Purposes: It is judging *rightly* for our selves. If it were not so, what prudent Man would advise it, or endeavour to persuade others to it? But, says an Objector, do not you follow the *Fathers*? Yes, as far as *Reason* requires, and no farther; therefore This is following our *own* Reason: And he that deserts the *Fathers* in this Instance, deserts *Himself*

* "*Reason* is that Faculty, whereby a Man must judge of "every Thing: Nor can a Man *believe* any thing except he have "some *Reason* for it; whether that Reason be a Deduction from "the *Light of Nature*, or a Branch of *divine Revelation* in the "Oracles of holy Scripture, or the *general* Interpretation of ge-"nuine *Antiquity*, or the proposal of our *own Church* consentane-"ous thereto, or lastly, the Result of some, or all of these; for "he that will rightly make use of his *Reason*, must take all "that is *reasonable* into Consideration. And it is admirable to "consider how the same Conclusions do naturally flow from all "these several Principles: And what, in the faithful use of the "Faculties that God hath given, Men have believed for true, "doth excellently agree with That *Revelation* that God hath ex-"hibited in the Scripture; and the Doctrine of the *Antient* "*Church* with them Both. *New Sect of Latitud-men*, in the *Phœnix*, Vol. ii. p. 766. written A. D. 1662.

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ſelf and his *own Reaſon*. Their Sentiments, ſo *antient*, ſo *univerſal*, carry the Force of an *Argument* [a] along with them, and a very *ſtrong* Argument too, all things conſidered [b]. Therefore the being conducted by thoſe Sentiments, along with Scripture, is the ſame thing with being convinced or perſuaded by *Argument*; which is hearkening to *right Reaſon*, which is ſubmitting to *God* (who gave us *Reaſon* for our Guide) and not to *human* Authority. It is following the ſafeſt and beſt Light which divine Providence has graciouſly afforded us. For, as a great and good Prelate has obſerved, "The *general Tradition* of the Church, next "to Scripture, is the *beſt* and *ſureſt* Confirma-

[a] "It is a good *Argument* for us to follow ſuch an Opinion, "becauſe it is made ſacred by the *Authority* of Councils and "Eccleſiaſtical Tradition: And ſometimes it is the *beſt Reaſon* "we have in a Queſtion; and then it is to be ſtrictly followed. "But there may be alſo at other times a Reaſon *greater* than it, "that ſpeaks againſt it; and Then the *Authority* muſt not carry "it. But then the Difference is not between *Reaſon* and *Autho-* "*rity*, but between *This* Reaſon and *That*, which is *greater*: "For *Authority* is a very *good Reaſon*, and is to prevail, unleſs "a *ſtronger* comes and diſarms it, and then it muſt give Place. "So that in this Queſtion, by *Reaſon* I do not mean a diſtinct "Topick, but a Tranſcendent that runs through all Topicks. "*Taylor*'s Liberty of Propheſying, Sect. x. p. 220.

[b] "Since we know what the *Catholick Faith* was, and how the "*Catholick Fathers* expounded Scripture, if the Words of Scripture "will *naturally* and *eaſily* admit that Senſe (much more if they "will not admit any other Senſe, without great *Force* and *Vio-* "*lence*) let any Man judge which is moſt *ſafe* and *reaſonable*, to "expound Scripture as the Catholick Faith and Catholick Fa- "thers expound it, and as Scripture moſt *eaſily* and *naturally* ex- "pounds it ſelf, or to *force* new Senſes and old Hereſies upon "Scripture, which the Catholick Church has always re- "jected and condemned. *Sherlock* Preſent State of Soc. Controv. "p. 80.

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"tion of this great Point now in queſtion be-
"tween us; and That which gives us the
"*greateſt* and *trueſt* Light for the right Un-
"derſtanding of the true Senſe and Meaning
"of Scripture, not only in this, but in moſt
"other *important* Doctrines of the Chriſtian
"Religion[s].

What I have ſaid, appears ſufficient to ſhew that the taking the *Antients* in, for the aſſiſting or informing our Judgments in this Queſtion, is *judging for our ſelves* in the moſt *rational* way that can be thought on. Nevertheleſs, I take the Liberty to obſerve, that thoſe who talk moſt of Mens uſing their *own* Underſtandings, often mean little by it, but to get the Direction of their *Faith* and *Conſciences* to Themſelves, or to make them change a *reaſonable* Veneration of the *Antients*, for a *blind* Admiration of ſome *modern* Preceptors. They very well know, that the generality of Mankind, (ſuch as read little, and Think leſs) will ſcarce judge for Themſelves at all, except it be as to the Choice of ſome Leader, or Leaders, whom they may ſuppoſe it ſafeſt to confide in. And it is among ſuch as Theſe, commonly that *new* Teachers ſeek Proſelytes; obtruding Themſelves as *Guides*, and at the ſame time aſſuring them that they need *no Guides*: Which, in Effect, is leading them about what way ſoever They pleaſe, artfully telling them that they go by themſelves, when in

[s] Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon*'s Vol. i. Serm. xliv. p. 456. Fol. Edit.

Truth,

Truth. They only change their Leaders. To ſay all at once, the true and the whole Meaning of the incredible Pains which ſome Perſons have taken to ſet the *Fathers* aſide, has been generally neither more nor leſs than this; to *remove* as much of the *Evidence* which ſtands againſt them, as they can with any *Decency* attempt to remove. They cannot, they dare not pretend to throw off *Scripture* it ſelf, unleſs they were reſolved to throw up *Chriſtianity* with it, and to declare openly for *Infidelity*. But there may be *Colours* invented for throwing off the *Fathers*; and therefore thus far They can proceed, in oppoſing the ancient Faith, and at the ſame time ſave Appearances. There lies the whole of this Matter, as I conceive, generally ſpeaking: Otherwiſe, it is manifeſtly againſt all Senſe and Reaſon to make the leaſt Queſtion either of the *Uſe*, or the *Value* of Eccleſiaſtical Antiquity.

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The Sum of what I have been endeavouring through this whole Chapter, is, That *Scripture* and *Antiquity*, (under the Conduct of *right Reaſon*) are what we ought to abide by, for the ſettling Points of Doctrine. I have not put the Caſe of *Scripture* and *Antiquity* interfering, or claſhing with each other: Becauſe it is a Caſe which never will appear in Points of *Importance*, ſuch as that is which we are now upon. However, as to the general Caſe, we may ſay, that Thoſe two ought always to go together, and to coincide with

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each other, and when They do ſo, They ſtand the firmer in their *united* Strength: But if ever they claſh, or appear to claſh, then undoubtedly there is an Error ſomewhere, like as when two Accountants vary in caſting up the ſame Sum. In ſuch a Caſe, a wiſe Man will not reſt ſatisfied (if the Thing be of Moment) till He finds out, if poſſible, the reaſon of the Difference, and diſcovers where the *Error* lies. For, either it muſt lie on the *Scripture-ſide* (when a Man takes That for *Scripture* which is not Scripture, or That for *true* Interpretation which is not true Interpretation) or it muſt lie on the *Tradition* Side, through ſome *Miſreport* made of the Antients, or ſome Miſtake of the Antients Themſelves. Then the Queſtion will be, which of the two Suppoſitions is moſt likely to be true in That Inſtance: And the Reſolution at length muſt turn upon a due weighing and conſidering all *Circumſtances*, with the *Reaſons* offered here and there, and then ballancing the whole Account.

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Shewing, that what has been lately offered in favour of the ARIAN *Interpretation of* JOHN i. 1, 2. *And of* HEBR. i. *is of no Force or Validity.*

THE Author of *Sober and charitable Diſquiſition*, had been pleaſed to ſay, That "an *honeſt* Mind, inquiſitive after *Truth*, and "*willing* to weigh the Matter *impartially*, and "to examine the Evidence on Both Sides "*thoroughly*, might be long in *Suſpenſe* before "He could determine to his full Satisfaction: "And that ſeveral Men of *equal* Senſe, Learn-"ing, Capacity, Probity, and Piety, may af-"ter ſuch Examination make different Deter-"minations upon the Matter[a]." He refers to his *Appendix* for Proof, which Appendix contains two oppoſite Views of *John* i. 1. and of *Hebr.* i. I would here previouſly remark ſomething of his manner of wording the Thing, and then proceed. Might it not as well have been ſaid, that there is as *much Reaſon* on one Side of the Queſtion, as there is on the other? Why ſhould an *invidious* Turn be given to what we are doing, that if we maintain our Point, and inſiſt upon it as true and juſt, it ſhall be interpreted to be as much as ſaying, that our Adverſaries have not *equal* Senſe, Learning, *&c.* with our ſelves? We deſign not, we deſire not to make any

[a] Sober and charitable, *&c.* p. 42, 43.

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such *Compariſons:* We leave *Perſons* out of the Queſtion, and deſire only to come to the Truth of *Things*. It is natural for many to admire the Founders of their Sect, or the leading Advocates of their Party [b]: And it might look like Rudeneſs, to ſay a word reflecting on their *Senſe*, *Learning*, *Capacity*, or *Probity*. Neither indeed is there any occaſion for detracting from their general Character, ſince it is certain that Men of as great *Senſe*, *Learning*, and *Piety*, to all outward Appearance, as any in their Times, have ſometimes fallen into *Hereſy*, (as They might into any other *great Sin*) and have perverted the Goſpel of Chriſt: *Let him that thinketh He ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* It is a wrong way to judge of Faith by the *Men* [c], rather than of the Men by their *Faith*, and *Conduct*. There is no *Senſe* however in going againſt *Truth*, no *Learning* in contradicting the *Wiſdom* of Heaven, no *Piety* nor *Probity* in departing from *God*. *Perſons* muſt be tried by the *Rule*, and not the *Rule* by their Character, be it otherwiſe ever ſo high

[b] Magnus profecto neſcio quis ſignificatur Magiſter, et tantæ Scientiæ qui Sectatoribus propriis non ſolum quæ *humana* ſunt noſſe, verum etiam quæ *ſupra Hominem* ſunt prænoſcere poſſe videatur; quales fere diſcipuli ſui jactitant fuiſſe *Valentinum*, *Donatum*, *Photinum*, *Apollinarem*, cæteroſque ejuſmodi. *Vincent. Lirinenſ.* c. xv.

[c] Solent quidem iſti *infirmiores* etiam de quibuſdam *Perſonis* ab Hæreſi captis ædificari in ruinam: Quare ille vel ille *Fideliſſimi* et *uſitatiſſimi* in Eccleſia, in illam Partem tranſierunt? Quis, hoc dicens, non ipſe ſibi reſpondet, neque *prudentes*, neque *fideles*, neque *uſitatos* æſtimandos, quos *Hæreſes* potuerint demutare. *Tertull.* Præſcript. c. iii.

or

or commendable[d]. Men may behave unworthy of themſelves; And God permits even *wiſe* Men, and *good* Men (as *Solomon* and *David*) ſometimes to fall, when they grow *ſecure* or *aſſuming*, for a Puniſhment to them, and for a *Trial* to others[e], and for a Warning to all, that they may learn to be *humble*, and *watchful*, and not to truſt ſo much to their own *Worth*, or *Parts*, as to their *Care*, and *Circumſpection*, and God's *Bleſſing* upon it. CHAP. VIII.

Thus much being premiſed for the taking off all undue *Admiration* of any Man's Perſon, and for the preventing any invidious *Compariſons*, (foreign and uſeleſs to the Point in hand) as well as for the putting the Cauſe upon a right Iſſue; I now proceed to examine the Merits of the Debate between the *Arians* and the *Athanaſians*, ſo far as concerns *John* i. 1. and *Hebr.* i. 10.

[d] Quid ergo ſi *Epiſcopus*, ſi *Diaconus*, ſi *Vidua*, ſi *Virgo*, ſi *Doctor*, ſi etiam *Martyr* lapſus a Regula fuerit, ideo Hæreſes veritatem videbuntur obtinere? ex *perſonis* probamus fidem, an ex *Fide* Perſonas? Nemo *ſapiens* eſt niſi Fidelis, nemo *major* niſi Chriſtianus; nemo autem *Chriſtianus*, niſi qui ad Finem perſeveraverit. *Tertul. Præſcript.* c. iii.

[e] Luce clarius aperta Cauſa eſt, cur interdum divina Providentia quoſdam Eccleſiarum *Magiſtros* nova quædam dogmata prædicare patiatur: *Ut tentet vos*, inquit, *Dominus Deus veſter.* Deut. xiii. 3. Et profecto magna *Tentatio* eſt, cum illum quem Tu *Prophetam*, quem *Prophetarum* diſcipulum, quem *Doctorem*, et Aſſertorem *veritatis* putes, quem ſumma *Veneratione* et *Amore* complexus ſis, is ſubito latentes noxios ſubinducat errores; quos nec cito deprehendere valeas, dum *antiqui Magiſterii* duceris præjudicio, nec facile damnare fas ducis, dum *Magiſtri veteris* impediris affectu. *Vincent. Lirin.* c. xv.

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I. The Author of *Sober and charitable Diſquiſition* undertook to repreſent the *Athanaſian* and *Arian* Conſtructions of *John* i. 1. fairly and impartially, as indeed common Equity and Juſtice required. He begins with the *Athanaſian*: But how ſoon does He diſcover Marks of *Partiality*, and *unequal* Dealing. He ſmooths over the *Arian* Conſtruction with all affectionate Tenderneſs, covering even its *real* and *greateſt* Faults, as we ſhall ſee preſently: But does he ſhew any Favour at all to the other? When he is interpreting for us, THE WORD WAS GOD, he preſently throws in, *the ſelf-ſame Being with the Father*[g]. He muſt have known how ambiguous, and equivocal[h] that Expreſſion of *ſelf-ſame Being* is, and that in one Senſe of it, it is not our Doctrine, but the *Sabellian Hereſy*. Might it not therefore have ſufficed to have ſaid, the *ſame God with the Father*, or *one God with the Father*? That is a Doctrine, which we inviolably maintain and adhere to, becauſe Scripture forbids us to admit *two* adorable *Gods*. As to the Queſtion about calling them the *ſelf-ſame Being*, it is a Queſtion about a Name, or a *Phraſe*, and a *ſcholaſtick* Queſtion, invented ſeveral Ages after our Doctrine had ſtood ſecure, and independent of it. And when the *Schoolmen* undertook to conſider this *verbal* Affair (for it is no more) they either rejected, or admitted the *Expreſſion*, with pro-

[g] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 51.
[h] See my *firſt Defence*, p. 167, 328.

per

per Diſtinctions; not ſcrupling to ſay *tres res*, or *tria entia relativa*, always meaning that the *Union* was too cloſe to admit of the Name of *Beings* in the Plural [i], without a ſoftening Epithet: And therefore *Being of Being*, or *Subſtance of Subſtance* (not *Beings*, or *Subſtances*) has been the Catholick Language. Let but Thoſe who object *Sameneſs* of *Being*, define the Terms, and tell us what conſtitutes *Sameneſs*, and then it will be very eaſy to tell Them how far we ſuppoſe the three Perſons to be the *ſame Being*. All the Difficulties about *Sameneſs*, or *Individual*, or *Numerical*, &c. reſolve only into This, that we know not preciſely, in all Caſes, what to call *ſame*, *individual*, *numerical*, and the like. The general Notion of the Trinity is clear, but the Meaning of thoſe *Terms* is looſe, confuſe, and undeterminate: So that the Perplexity (if there be any) lies not in the *Thing*, but in ſome dark *Names*, which many uſe without any certain Meaning. Say but what thoſe *Words* or *Names* preciſely ſignify, and it will be very eaſy to determine how far they are applicable to the *true Notion* of the Trinity. But to proceed:

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I have obſerved how unfairly the Gentleman has dealt with our Doctrine: Let us next take notice, how tenderly He deals with the *Arian* Conſtruction of the ſame Words. *The Word was God*, viz. a *divine Perſon*, a *moſt*

[i] See my *ſecond Defence*, Q. xxiii. p. 452——460. 2d. Edit.

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Godlike Being [k]. He ſhould have ſaid, *Another God, a Creature* of the *great God* [l], which is their plain and certain Meaning; tho' they are very reſerved and baſhful in the wording of that Article, as they have always been, dreading to ſpeak it out in broad Terms. However, if God the Son be *God*, as the Text plainly ſays, He muſt be either *Another God*, or *one God with the Father*: So that if our Doctrine of *one God* be rejected, *Two Gods* is the Conſequence directly. Beſides, ſince They muſt own, and do own, that He was *God* before the World was made, they ſhould tell us, whether He was God *by Nature*, or by *Office*. He had no *Office* ſo early, that I know of: It ſeems then, He was God *by Nature*. So, there are *two Gods* by Nature upon the *Arian* Principles. Therefore let any ſober Chriſtian judge, which is the true Interpretation of the Text, Theirs or Ours, thus far. Now let us proceed.

The Word WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. That is, ſay we, *before* any Thing was *made*. And we ſay it for theſe two plain Reaſons: Becauſe the Order of the Sentence requires it, ſince the Account of the Creation follows after; and becauſe *all Things* were made *by the Word*: Therefore he was *before* all *Creatures*. The *Arian* Conſtruction, as This Gentleman repreſents it [m], is, IN THE BEGINNING,

[k] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition. p. 54.
[l] See my *firſt* and *ſecond Defence*, Q. v.
[m] Ibid. p. 54, 55.

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BINNING, *when God created the Heavens and the Earth.* Now, if *Heaven* and *Earth* are Words which ſignify *All Creatures*, we admit the Expoſition: But if they mean any Thing leſs, they are ſhort of St. *John*'s Expoſition of his own Phraſe, which he interprets to mean, *all Things* that ever were *made*, that is, *all Creatures.*

ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM WAS NOT ANY THING MADE THAT WAS MADE[p]. Now, we interpret and ſay, that if all Things were made *by him*, then he himſelf muſt be *unmade*: And ſince *made by Him*, amounts to declaring him *Maker* of all Creatures (as we ſhall ſee upon *Hebr.* i. 10.) we again conclude, He is no Creature; becauſe a *Creature-Creator*, if at all reconcilable with *Reaſon*[o], is however utterly irreconcilable

[p] One may obſerve the Force of this Text even upon Thoſe that came very unwillingly (and upon the whole not ſincerely) into the Doctrine it contained, ſince it obliged *Eunomius* himſelf, one of the groſſer kind of *Arians*, but the ſhrewdeſt Man of the Sect, to admit thus much, that Chriſt muſt be as much ſuperior to his *Creatures*, as the *Maker* muſt be to the Things he has *made*; and that He was really inveſted with *creative* Powers by the Father. A remarkable Conceſſion, and ſuch as ought to have made a *modeſt* Man renounce all his *Metaphyſicks*; which alone hindred Him from coming entirely into Church Principles. The Place I ſpeak of, is in his *Apologetick* (which was anſwered by St. *Baſil*) and runs as here follows.

Τοσαύτην ἀυτῷ νόμομεν ὑπαρχειν, ὅσην ἴσχειν ἀναγκαῖον τῶν ἰδίων ποιημάτων τὸν ποιητην. παῖδα γὰρ δι' ἀυτῦ γεγενῆσθαι κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Ἰωάννην ὁμολογοῦμεν, συναπογεννηθεισης ἄνωθεν ἀυτῷ τῆς δημιουργικῆς δυνάμεως, ὡς ἶναι θεὸν μονογενῆ παίδων τῶν μετ' ἀυτὸν, καὶ δι' ἀυτῦ γενομένων. Eunom. Apolog. p. 281. Fabr. Bibl. Græc. l. v. c. 23. Baſil. opp. Tom. i. p. 623. Edit. Bened.

Conf. *Baſil.* contr. Eunom. l. ii. p. 255. Edit. Bened.

[o] A late ingenious Writer argues the Point, in a very rational manner,

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able with *Scripture*, which, every where makes *creative* Power the diſtinguiſhing Character of God moſt High [p]. The *Arian* Conſtruction is, *All* [other] *Things were made by Him*, and *without Him was not any Thing made that was* [then] *made*. So, by inſerting *other* there, and *then* here; that is, by altering St. *John*'s moſt expreſs, moſt emphatical Propoſitions, a *new* Senſe is made for Him which He had *doubly* excluded, as far as Words could do it. For our Conſtruction, we have, 1. Expreſs Text. 2. The *Order* and Coherence of the Sentence. 3. The *Tenour* of *Scripture*, appropriating *creative* Powers to God Supreme. 4. The *Reaſon* of the Thing: For it is not *reaſonable* to ſuppoſe that one *Creature* ſhould *create* another. 5. The *univerſal* Judgment of the firſt and pureſt Ages of the Chriſtian Church. What is there now, on the other hand, to counterbalance theſe Reaſons, or to oblige us to run croſs to ſo many evident Marks of a *true* Interpretation? The Author of *Sober and charitable*, &c. pleads on

manner, thus: "*Creation*, or the bringing a Thing into Being "which before had none, or was once nothing, is undoubtedly "the proper Act of an *Almighty* or *Infinite* Power: And, as "muſt be granted, infinite Power is an *incommunicable* Attri- "bute or Perfection. Beſides, if a Power of *creating* could "be *communicated*, then the Being on which it is conferred, hav- "ing the *ſame Power*, might endue a Creature of its *own* with "ſuch a Power; and This Creature might *make* another ſuch "Creature, and ſo on *in infinitum*; which is ſo ſhocking an Ab- "ſurdity, that no one can bear the Thought or Imagination of it. *Eſſay concerning rational Notions*, p. 159. printed for W. Innys, 1733.

[p] See my *Sermons*, p. 91, *&c.*

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the other Side, that the Apoſtle, if He had intended to teach that the Logos was *God, Creator of all Things*, might have ſaid it more *plainly*, and with leſs Circumlocution [q]. But we think, St. *John* has done it in *choſen* and *expreſſive* Words, and could not have made uſe of better, to expreſs what he intended, all Things conſidered [r]. He might have ſaid, adds this Gentleman, that *in God are three perſonal Diſtinctions, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.* But St. *John* was wiſer than to teach *Sabellianiſm*, as it has been ſince called: The bleſſed Three are not *perſonal Diſtinctions*, but *diſtinct Perſons*; as is proved from St. *John* in this very Place, becauſe the *Word* was *with* God.

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It is aſked, could either *Jew* or *Heathen* gueſs that He did not mean a *diſtinct Being* [s]? I anſwer, neither *Jew* nor *Heathen*, who knew that St. *John* believed the *Old Teſtament*, could be ſo weak as to imagine that He meant to teach *another God*, or *two Gods*. However, The *Chriſtian Church* are the propereſt Interpreters of St. *John*'s Meaning: Why muſt *Jews* or *Heathens*, as ſuch, be appealed to [t], rather than Chriſt's Diſciples, for the underſtanding *Chriſtian* Doctrine? The Objector here twice [u] confounds *perſonal Characters* (as He

[q] Sober and charitable Diſqu. p. 55.
[r] See the whole explained above.
Compare *Tillotſon* Serm. xliii. Vol. i. Fol. Ed.
[s] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 56.
[t] See my *Sermons*, p. 36——39.
[u] Ibid. p. 56, 57.

had

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He aſks, *Why is it doubled over*, THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING? To be the more emphatical againſt *Hereticks*, or the better to connect the Sentence, and to introduce what follows.

And why ſo minute, as to inform us, not one is to be excepted[v]? Perhaps to foreclose, condemn, and put to ſhame all Thoſe who, notwithſtanding ſuch his *Minuteneſs*, would yet be bold enough to foiſt in *other* there, and *then* here, to elude and fruſtrate his Meaning: Experience ſhews, that all his Guards are *uſeful*, none ſuperfluous. But if the Reader deſires a fuller Account, He may pleaſe to look back to what I have ſaid above[w]. I have anſwered all the *Queſtions*: And now let the Reader judge, whether They have Weight enough to bear down the Chriſtian Interpretation founded upon the Reaſons before recited. Yet The Author is pleaſed to recommend the other, in very high Terms: *Not a Word is loſt*, in that way, *every thing has a plain, proper, and obvious Senſe*[x]. Is it poſſible? Has the Word *God*, for inſtance,

[v] Ibid. 57. [w] See above, p. 256.
[x] Sober and charitable, &c. p 55.

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its *plain, proper*, and *obvious* Senſe[y], when it is made to ſignify a Godlike *Creature*? And is there not *a Word loſt*, when the very ſtrongeſt Expreſſions which the Apoſtle could uſe, to exempt the *Logos* from being one of the Things *made*, are defeated and fruſtrated, by forcing the Words *other*, and *then*, upon Him, which He never wrote, and by obtruding a *Senſe*, which, it is likely, He abhorred? Have the Words, *all Things*, and *was not any Thing*, their *plain* and *obvious* Senſe aſſigned them, when they are violently wreſted from their *abſolute* Meaning to a *limited* one; and are arbitrarily clogged with Reſerves and Reſtrictions, tho', according to the plain Letter, and other plain Circumſtances, they form *univerſal* Propoſitions, affirmative and negative? If ſuch Liberties as theſe are to be taken with *plain* Texts, and without any apparent *Neceſſity*, it is in vain to preſcribe any *ſober* Rules of Interpretation, or to attempt to *prove* any thing from *dead* Writings. But if *Words* can be of any Weight or Significancy, Theſe Texts of St. *John* are plainly *definitive* on our Side of the Queſtion: Which I have ſhewn more at large elſewhere[z]. Or if the Reader pleaſes to peruſe Profeſſor *Frank*'s Treatiſe, lately tranſlated from the *German* into *Engliſh*[a], he will there find the *Divinity*

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[y] As to the ſtrict Senſe of the word *God*, in that Place, ſee my *Sermons*, p. 35, 36.

[z] Sermons the *firſt*, *ſecond* and *third*, at Lady Moyer's Lecture.

[a] *Frank*'s *Nucleus*, or *Chriſt the Sum and Subſtance of Scripture*, p. 93.——173.

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of our bleſſed Lord ſolidly demonſtrated by *ſix* ſeveral *Arguments* drawn from this *ſingle* Chapter, but compared with other Texts.

I may over and above advance one more Argument, fairly deducible from the Diſtreſs which the Impugners of Chriſt's *Divinity* have all along been in, with relation to this Proeme of St. *John*, and the Difficulties they have lain under in contriving to evade its Force. The *Alogi*[b], (who appear to have been a Branch of the *Ebionites*) as alſo *Theodotus*[c], took the ſhort and plain Way, which was to reject the whole Goſpel, as not being of St. *John*'s inditing.

The *Arians* were ſo diſtreſſed with the ſame Paſſages, that They knew not how to evade them but by a *new* Invention of a twofold *Logos*[d], one conſidered as an *Attribute*, *Quality*, or *Operation* of God (after the *Sabellian* way) the other conſidered as a *Creature*, made by the former. And here They were under a *Dilemma* which They could never get clear of: For either all Things were made by the *Logos* in the former Senſe, and then how was the *Logos* MADE FLESH? Or all things were made by the *Logos* in the latter Senſe, created by a *Creature*, who muſt alſo, if the Word *All* be ſtrictly taken, have created Himſelf; which is palpably abſurd. It ſeems, that They

[b] Epiphan. Hær. l. i. 3. Philaſtr. Hær. lx. Damaſcen. Hær. 51.

[c] Epiphan. Hær. liv. 1.

[d] Vid. *Athanaſii* Opp. 260, 282, 398, 409, 413, 503, 505, 620. Edit. Bened.

inclined moſt to the former. And if we may truſt to *Anaſtaſius Sinaita*, That was the very Conſtruction which *Arius* Himſelf eſpouſed [e].

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Next, let us inquire, whether the *modern* Impugners of Chriſt's Divinity have ſucceeded any better, or whether *They* alſo have not betrayed the like Confuſion and Diſtreſs. I need not ſay any thing of *Socinus*'s wild and extravagant Interpretation, which has long been exploded by his own Diſciples, and which ſtands now only as a Monument of the wonderful Virtue of ſtrong *Prejudices*, and *Self-admiration*. *Zwicker* came after, and He took the ſurer way, which was to deny the Authenticity of the *Proeme*, and to ſtrike it out of the Canon of the *New Teſtament*. *Artemonius* (alias *Sam. Crellius*) is a later Inſtance, and which comes as fully up to my Purpoſe: He has been moving Heaven and Earth (as I have before [f] intimated) to perſuade us into a *different Reading* of one of the *critical* Words in St. *John*, on which much depends. He has ranſacked all *Antiquity* [g] for Authorities to juſtify an *Alteration*; and becauſe he could *find* none, He has *made* as many as he pleaſed, by mere dint of Wit and

[e] *Arius*'s Interpretation of the Place, according to *Anaſtaſius* in his *Hodegus*, runs thus:

Καλῶς εἶπεν ὁ Ἰωάννης, ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, τοῦτ' ἐστι τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ Θεοῦ. ἀγγελος εἶπεν, ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ υἱὸς, ἀλλ' ὁ λόγος ὁ προφορικὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Anaſtaſ. Hodeg. p. 330.

[f] See above, p. 296.

[g] Initium Evangelii S. Joannis ex Antiquitate Eccleſiaſtica reſtitutum. Per L. M. *Artemonium*. A. D. 1726.

Fancy.

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Fancy. Certainly St. *John* had ſome Direction *extraordinary*, or was otherwiſe a very ſagacious Perſon, that, after the utmoſt Improvements made in the Art of Chicanery, and wire-drawing of Words, yet nothing can effectually do the Buſineſs, even at this Day, but *altering the Text*; tho', after all, there is no manner of Countenance from any Copies for doing it. One thing however I may obſerve of *Artemonius*, which as it ſhews his *Acuteneſs*, betrays at the ſame time a *Conſciouſneſs*, or a tacit Acknowledgment, that we are in the right to interpret the Word *God* in the ſtrict Senſe, as we do. He argues, that it was by no means proper that the *Word* ſhould be called *God*, leſt That Appellation, taken with ſo many other plauſible Circumſtances, ſhould lead Men into a Snare, and make them believe Chriſt to be *God moſt High* [h]. Now, what is This but confeſſing, that ſuch an Inference is *natural* and *obvious*, upon the Suppoſition that Chriſt is called *God* in Scripture? He ſaw the Force of it, and the inevitable Neceſſity we are under of ſo interpreting: And that Conſideration made Him take ſuch immenſe, but fruitleſs Pains, to defeat all Thoſe Texts where Chriſt is expreſsly called *God*. But if That ſingle Conſideration ſtruck This Gentleman in ſo ſenſible a manner, what can we think of all the other Texts, which over and above aſcribe to Chriſt *di-*

[h] Artemonius, Par. ii. p. 295.

vine

vine Perfections, and *divine* Worſhip alſo! It is plain, that *Artemonius* could not have been againſt us, had He not ſet out at firſt upon a *falſe* Principle, that *Human Imagination* is the Meaſure of *divine Truths*. CHAP. VIII.

II. From *John* i. I now paſs on to *Hebr.* i. in order to examine whether what we find there, be not altogether as *definitive* as the former. Here the Author of *Sober and charitable*, &c. undertakes to give a fair and impartial Account of Both Parties. Notwithſtanding which, in his very firſt ſetting out, He repreſents us as direct and manifeſt *Sabellians*, againſt all Reaſon and Juſtice, and common Equity. He puts theſe Words upon us, as expreſſing our Senſe: *God may be ſaid to make all Things by his Son, as a Man to underſtand by his Reaſon*[i]. This is not our way of ſpeaking, or thinking, on the Subject, (it was *Sabellius*'s, it was *Arius*'s) and therefore ought not to be reported as *ours*. For, what if we do not call Father and Son *two Subſtances* (the Union being too cloſe to admit of ſuch Expreſſions) yet we ſcruple not to ſay, *Subſtance of Subſtance*, like as *God of God*. We contrive our Expreſſions ſo as to ſuit the Scripture-Idea of a *real* Diſtinction without *Diviſion*, and of an *Union* alſo without Confuſion. We maintain, that there may be a real *Diverſity* conſiſtent with real *Unity*, and that what is *multiple* in one Reſpect, may be *one* in ano-

[i] Sober and charitable Diſq. p. 59.

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ther. And thus we ſtand clear, as of *Sabellian* ſin on one Hand, ſo likewiſe of *Tritheiſm* on the other [k]. The Author proceeds to ſet forth [l] a Summary of our Reaſonings upon *Hebr.* i. And he has indeed brought together a great deal more than can ever be fairly anſwered. But without replying to what was offered on our Side, and without ſo much as endeavouring to ſhew how the Force of thoſe many ſtrong Expreſſions can be evaded, or the Words accounted for, He contents Himſelf barely with repreſenting the Pleadings on the other Side, producing our Antagoniſts not as *Reſpondents*, but *Opponents* only. But, ſuppoſing that the Adverſaries had ever ſo much to urge in that way, yet unleſs they could reconcile it with the Words of the Texts, and give a clear Account of the whole, it is doing the Work by Halves, and can, at moſt, be eſteemed but as a lame Defence. However, by this means, all our Arguments from *Hebr.* i. are left ſtanding in full Force, and it remains only that we remove Objections, to clear the whole Thing. Two Conſiderations are ſuggeſted by this Author; firſt, that the *Chapter* here under Enquiry, makes the Son *another Being from God*; ſecondly, it makes Him alſo an *inferior Being* [m]. Let us now examine, how theſe Pretences are ſupported.

[k] See my *Defence*, Q. xxii. p. 330, &c. *Second Defence*, p. 459, &c. 2d. Ed. *Farther Vindication*, p. 56, 57, 58, 59.

[l] Sober and charitable Diſquiſition, p. 59. —— 65.

[m] Ibid. p. 66.

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1. As to the firſt Suggeſtion, it is to be obſerved, that it amounts only to a *metaphyſical* Subtlety about *Being* and *Perſon*, as if the Words were convertible Terms; which tho it has been tried a thouſand times over, could never yet be made out. But here we may perceive, who they are that run into *metaphyſical* and *logical* Niceties, to evade plain Words of Scripture [a], inſtead of keeping cloſe to ſacred Writ, and what it teaches in full and expreſs Terms. But I would further remark, tho I have occaſionally hinted it before, that all This Diſcourſe about *Being* and *Perſon* is foreign, and not pertinent; becauſe if Both theſe Terms were thrown out, our Doctrine would ſtand juſt as before, independent of them, and very intelligible without them. So it ſtood for above 150 Years, before *Perſon* was heard of in it; and it was later before *Being* was mentioned. Therefore, if all the Objection be againſt thoſe, however innocent, *Expreſſions*, let the Objectors drop the *Names*, and accept the *Thing*. They may expreſs the Doctrine thus, if they pleaſe; that the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Ghoſt God, and all *one God*; and yet the *Father* is not the *Son*, nor *Holy Ghoſt*, nor *either* of them the *Father*: This is plainly the Doctrine of Scripture, let them expreſs it in what Terms they

[a] How common and conſtant the Practice is, I have often obſerved elſewhere.

Defence, Q. xxii. p. 303, 327, 480.

Second Defence, p. 4, 68, 113, 149, 225, 335, 430, 439, 489, 516, 519, 525. 2d. Edit.

please. Each is *Jehovah*, and yet they are not three *Jehovahs*: This is Truth, (if Scripture can prove a Truth) and we need no more. But if any one has a mind to express this Doctrine in such Words as *Justin Martyr*, and *Athenagoras*, and *Irenæus*, and *Theophilus*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus* expressed it in (before *Person* or *Being* was heard of [o]) He is at Liberty as to *Words*, while he admits the *Sense*. For we are not bound down to *Names*, but to *Things*. These Considerations premised, I now proceed with our Author.

He objects, that the *Son is distinguished from God* [p]. From *God the Father*, He means: And so He should be, because *God the Son* is not *God the Father*. He adds, if *God* means God the Father, *He only must be God, for he says of himself, He is* GOD ALONE. Here I might run out into a particular Explication of what concerns *exclusive Terms*: But because I have often done it before, I chuse to refer [q]. But in the mean while, if the *exclusive* Terms are so strict, how come the *Arians* off with their Doctrine of *Two Gods*? We can give a good Reason why the *exclusive* Terms should yet tacitly suppose and include what so intimately belongs to God; But certainly all *Creatures* are for ever excluded.

[o] See my *Second Defence*, p. 449. alias 454.
[p] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 66.
[q] Sermon iv. per tot. *Second Defence*, 31, 56, 57, 84, 99, 198, 390. Edit. 2d. alias 36, 61, 62, 89, 104, 203, 395. *Third Defence*, or *farther Vindication*, p. 33.

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The Author goes on to obſerve, That Father and Son muſt be *Two Things* [r]. One would hope, He does not mean *Two Gods*, equal or unequal: As to any thing elſe, we are unconcerned; we allow that the *Father* is not the *Son*, and ſo *vice verſa*. He ſays further, The Son is *not the ſelf ſame Individual Subſtance* [s]. Here again the Reader may obſerve, what kind of Arguments we are attack'd with: No Regard to the *proper*, *obvious*, *natural* Senſe of the Texts, but all the Diſpute is made to turn upon *logical* Niceties, or *metaphyſical* Subtilties about the Nature of Things confeſſedly *myſterious*, or rather upon the Meaning of *technical* Terms and Names, ſuch as *individual* [t], &c. It is ſufficient again to ſay, that the *Son is not the Father*, and yet each is *Jehovah*, and *Jehovah* is *One*. Either deny this to be Scripture, or ſay, that no Scripture can prove the Point: And then what ſignifies arguing from *John* i. or from *Hebr.* i. it is all but empty Amuſement.

It is aſked, can a Perſon *begotten* be the expreſs Image of a Perſon *unbegotten*, when the Properties are ſo unlike [u]? That our Scripture has ſo taught [v], is as plain as the Sun: Therefore the Queſtion ſhould have been put, whether the Texts ſhall be allowed, or ſhall be ſtruck out of the Canon? As to *begotten* and

[r] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 67.
[s] Ibid. p. 68.
[t] See my *Second Defence*, Q. ix. 327. 2d Edit. alias p. 322. Q. xxiii. p. 453. alias 448.
[u] Ibid. p. 68.
[v] Col. i. 15. Hebr. i. 3.

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unbegotten, they are *Relations* only; and (to compare *small* Things with *great*) *Adam unbegotten* and *Seth begotten* were exceedingly *alike*, and one the *expreſs Image* of the other, notwithſtanding: So there muſt be ſomething more than the Circumſtance before mentioned, to prove a Diſſimilitude, or Inequality [w]. But this way of prying into what is unſearchable, in order to evade plain Scripture Texts, is not treating the Scripture reverently: Neither is there any Argument in it, any more than in a blind Man's reaſoning about the nature of Colours. A very acute and judicious Writer well ſays: "'Tis certain we cannot ſpeak of "*God* with too great Moderation. It is bet-"ter to reſt ſatisfied with an *imperfect* Know-"ledge of him, by being content with *general* "Ideas, than to run the Hazard of thinking "unworthily of that great Being, by our "*Raſhneſs* in proceeding to *determinate* Ideas [x]." That is to ſay, by attempting to *determine* the *Modus*, about which we have properly no Ideas; or by turning Ideas of pure *Intellect* into Ideas of *Imagination*, which is equally abſurd. Hitherto we have been conſidering, whether the Son be *another Being* (by which the Author means *another God*) different from God the Father; Which the Objector has not proved.

2. We are next to conſider whether the Son be *inferior*, in Nature, or Perfections, or can be proved to be ſo from *Hebr.* 1. It is pleaded,

[w] See my Anſwer to *Whitby*, p. 14, 15.

[x] *Crouſaz* new art of Thinking, Vol. ii. p. 80. Engl. Edit.

that

that God *appointed him Heir of all Things*[y]. Therefore (for That muſt be the Conſequence, or none) He is an *inferior* God. Why then is it not ſaid, that They are *Two Gods*? However, to anſwer more directly, but withal very briefly; the Son's *voluntary* Condeſcention neither *ſuppoſes* Him *inferior*, nor *makes* Him ſo. CHAP. VIII.

It is further objected, that ſince God made the Worlds *by Him*, The Father only is *efficient*, and the Son the *Inſtrument*[z]. It muſt be owned that the *Arians*, formerly[a] as well as ſince, have ſuggeſted as much: But it is all Fiction and Fancy, without Support from Scripture, confuted in this very Chapter, as we ſhall ſee preſently. There is no Foundation in the Text for any ſuch unworthy Thought of God the Son. The Prepoſition *by* proves nothing of it; for it is frequently made uſe of in Scripture, when the *Father* Himſelf is the Perſon to whom it is applied[b]. But what Room is there for further Diſpute here upon that Head, when the Text it ſelf expreſſes the proper *Efficiency* of God the Son, as fully and clearly as it is poſſible to be expreſſed? THOU LORD IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE

[y] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 69. [z] Ibid. p. 69.

[a] Vid. *Athanaſ. Orat.* i. p. 430. *Orat.* 2. 498.

[b] *Baſil.* de Spir. Sancto, Opp. Tom. iii. c. v. p. 6, &c. Edit. Bened. *Taylor*'s true Script. Doctrine, p. 347. *Alexander*'s Eſſay on *Irenæus*, p. 148. *Franck*'s Nucleus, p. 118.

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WORKS OF THINE HANDS[c]. This is ſaid of God the Son[d], who is alſo *Jehovah* in the Pſalm from whence theſe Words are taken: Could there be any Words thought on, either plainer, or ſtronger, to expreſs a proper *Efficiency* than thoſe are? And if thoſe are not ſufficient to ground our Doctrine upon, what can we think of *ſacred Writ*, (with Reverence be it ſpoken) but as of a Book overſpread with Traps and Snares, to deceive the Chriſtian World? It is true, there are Tropes, Figures, and Metaphors in holy Scripture, as when Chriſt is called a *Door*, a *Vine*, a *Way*, and the like; or when God is ſaid to have *Eyes*, *Hands*, *Mouth*, *Heart*, &c. And, in ſuch Caſes, every ſenſible Man knows, that a *literal* Conſtruction would be abſurd: But in the Inſtance now before us, here is no Mark at all of any Trope, Figure, or Metaphor, nor any reaſonable Objection againſt interpreting upon the *Letter*. So far from it, that the whole Tenor of Scripture confirms us in it, that Chriſt is *Jehovah*, and properly *Creator*: And the *Worſhip* aſcribed to Him is another concurring Circumſtance to compleat the Demonſtration. In ſhort then, thoſe *Arian* Salvos come too late: The Text it ſelf has, in *expreſs* Words, precluded them.

The Author goes on to object: *Upholding all Things, but by the Word of God's Power.* Dr.

[c] Hebr. i. 10. compare Pſalm, cii. 25.

[d] See my *Defence*, p. 95. Sermons, p. 63. Compare *Bull.* Judic. Eccl. c. v. ſ. 8. p. 319. Dr. *Knight*'s Sermons, p. 51, &c.

Clark

Clark interprets it *Father's Power*: Which is a poſſible, not a certain Conſtruction. The Text may as probably, or more probably be underſtood of the Son's *own* Power. However, be it Father's or Son's, it is all *one Power*, and He and his Father are *one*. The Author adds, *Seating himſelf not in God's Throne, but at his right Hand* [f]. And what then? Is he not a *ſecond* Perſon? But, it ſeems, that if He had been ſeated in the *ſame Throne*, the Author would then allow the *Equality*. Turn we therefore to the Book of *Revelations*, and there we find them Both in one Throne. It is THE THRONE (not Thrones) OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB [g]: And Chriſt himſelf declares that He was in his *Father's* Throne [h]. CHAP. VIII.

It is aſked, why ſhould Angels be called upon, to worſhip Him, if he were God *equal* to the Father? *Can they be ſuppoſed ignorant, if that were the Caſe* [i]? To which I reply, that tho' *Angels* were fully apprized of his high Perfection and Dignity, yet as to the particular *Times*, *Places*, and *Circumſtances*, when, and where, and in what manner, They ſhould pay their Homage or Devotions, They might wait for *ſpecial* Orders. The Father's Manifeſting his Son to the World, was a new and

[e] Sober and charitable, *&c.* p. 69.

[f] What the Phraſe, of *ſitting at God's right Hand*, imports, is very judiciouſly and carefully diſcuſſed by *Vitringa*, Obſerv. Sacr. l. ii. c. 4, 5.

[g] Revel. xxii. i.

[h] Revel. iii. 21. Compare Zechar. vi. 12, 13. and *Vitringa*, Ibid. c. 5. p. 310.

[i] Sober and Charitable, *&c.* p. 70, 71.

extra-

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extraordinary Occaſion: And how ſhould the *Angels* know in what manner They were to behave upon it, without particular Direction? They were ordered thereupon to repeat or renew their ſolemn Exerciſes of Devotion towards the Son, now, become Man, and clothed in Fleſh: As they had alſo ſpecial Directions for celebrating his Nativity, or Incarnation in devout Doxologies [k].

It is further pleaded, that the Words, GOD, EVEN THY GOD, argue ſome *Inferiority* of God the Son. Yes, of the Son conſidered as *Man* [l] and in his State of Humiliation, in which God the Father *anointed* Him *with the Oil of Gladneſs*, with the Unction of the Spirit, *above* his *Fellows*; his *Partners* in the ſame Nature [m], Partakers of the ſame Fleſh and Blood; on which Account *He is not aſhamed to call them Brethren* [n].

The Author aſks, *why ſhould* not the Apoſtle *roundly aſſert* that Chriſt was *Jehovah*, if it were *his Purpoſe to ſet* him forth as ſuch [o]? Had He done it ever ſo roundly, a contentious Adverſary might ſtill have found fault, and might

[k] Luke ii. 13, 14. Compare Rev. xii. 11, 12.

[l] Ἡ θεότης ὁ χριστὸς, ἀλλ' ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῷ. ἵνα πᾶσι τοῖς μετόχοις σὺ φησὶ, τίνες δὲ εἰσιν οἱ μέτοχοι, ἀλλ' ἢ οἱ ἄνθρωποι; τουτέστι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐκ ἐκ μέτρου ἔλαβεν ὁ χριστός. *Chryſoſt. in loc.* And ſo other Greek Fathers, *Baſil, Theodoret, Theophylact, Oecumenius.*

[m] See Dr. *Bennet* on the Trinity, who explains the Text at large, and very juſtly; excepting that He diſlikes the antient Notion of the *Unction* of the *Spirit*, which yet ſeems to be the true one, p. 31——35.

[n] Hebr. ii. 11.

[o] Sober and charitable, &c. p. 73.

have

have required ſomewhat further. The Apoſtle has ſaid what is *ſufficient* for the Conviction of any *reaſonable* Man, by applying what is directed to *Jehovah* in the *Pſalm*, to God the *Son* in this Chapter. This is ſaying the thing roundly enough: And we are not obliged to give Reaſons why He has ſaid no more, if he has ſaid what may ſuffice with Men of ordinary Diſcernment. But I may hint further, that a very probable Reaſon may be aſſigned why He did not take that preciſe Method which the Objector fancies He ſhould have done. It was the Apoſtles direct Deſign, as it ſeems, to prove that the *Son* was above the *Angels*, in Oppoſition, very probably, to the *Simonians* or *Cerinthians* of that Time, who attributed the Creation of the World to *Angels*, and who looked upon *Jeſus* as a mere *Man*, and as ſuch *inferior* to Angels[q]. Therefore the Apoſtle chiefly labours theſe two Points, namely, to prove that Chriſt was really *Creator*[r], and that He is vaſtly *ſuperior* to *Angels*. What he further inſinuates of his being *Jehovah* comes in by the Bye: And it would not have been directly to his Purpoſe, to have inſiſted more particularly upon it: Becauſe even That would not have proved him (in the Opinion of the Hereticks then prevailing) ſuperior to *Angels*, ſince they looked upon *Jehovah*, the God of the Old Teſta-

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[q] Vid. *Bull* Judic. Eccl. c. v. ſ. 8. p. 320.

[r] Hebr. i. 2, 10.

ment

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ment as no more than *Angel*[s]. However, tho' I aſſign a Reaſon, which appears not improbable for the Apoſtle's ſaying no more, yet we have a Right to inſiſt upon it, that there is no need of aſſigning any reaſon at all for his not ſaying more than was *ſufficient* for every Purpoſe. There is no end of Cavils when Men are diſpoſed to indulge them. The *Jews* ſought after a *Sign*, but had none more given them, after they had had *enough*. They demanded that Chriſt ſhould come *down* from the *Croſs* for their Satisfaction: But infinite Wiſdom would not condeſcend to ſatisfy them in *their* way, when They would not ſubmit to other very *ſufficient* and better Evidences. The Queſtion therefore is not, whether the Apoſtle in this place has ſaid all that *could have been ſaid*, but whether He has ſaid as much as was *needful*. We conceive that he has: And let Thoſe who think otherwiſe, conſider how they can fairly evade the Force of what they here find, before they require more. Let them think how it is poſſible to elude what St. *Paul* has here ſaid to prove that Chriſt is *Jehovah*, tho' he has proved it only by the bye, and has not largely or directly inſiſted upon it.

[s] Poſt hunc *Cerinthus* Hæreticus erupit, ſimilia docens: Nam et ipſe mundum inſtitutum eſſe ab illis [Angelis] dicit: Chriſtum ex ſemine *Joſeph* natum proponit, Hominem illum tantum modo ſine Divinitate contendens; ipſam quoque Legem ab *Angelis* datam perhibens; *Judæorum Deum*, non Dominum, ſed *Angelum* promens. *Pſeudo-Tertull. Præſcript.* c. xlviii. Conf. Epiphan. Hær. xxviii. 1.

I ſhall

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I ſhall only add, that if the Point is to be decided by the aſking of *Queſtions* in this way, let leave be given to the Orthodox alſo, to aſk a few Queſtions in their Turn. If Chriſt be a *Creature*, why is it not *roundly aſſerted* either in Old or New Teſtament? And if He and the Father be *two Gods*, ſupreme and inferior, why is not That alſo *roundly aſſerted*, in ſome part of Scripture at leaſt? We have the more reaſon to expect it ſhould, becauſe otherwiſe the *contrary* Doctrine hath ſo many, and ſo plauſible Appearances of *Truth*, that the moſt ſerious and conſcientious Perſons are under *inevitable* Danger of Deception by them. And therefore, if we may be allowed to reaſon and argue with the Tremendous Deity, upon the Subject of his Revelations, or Diſpenſations towards Mankind, none, we imagine, can with more Juſtice, or with better Grace, aſk; why, has not Scripture, ſomewhere or other dropp'd a Hint or two about Chriſt's being a *Creature*, or about his being an *Inferior* God, admitting *two Gods*, two *adorable* Deities, to prevent our falling into an otherwiſe unavoidable Deluſion? I doubt not, if That were the *Truth*, but that our *Lord* Himſelf (whoſe Humility is ſo juſtly celebrated) and his *Diſciples* after Him, would have openly proclaimed it; and that we ſhould have as plainly found it in the New Teſtament throughout, as now we find the Reverſe. Can we imagine that a Truth of that Moment (if it were a Truth)

ſhould

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ſhould be left in Obſcurity, to be drawn out at length, after more than 300 Years, by *Arius*, *Aetius* and *Eunomius* [t]; and that by the Help chiefly of *logical* Conceits, and *metaphyſical* Speculations, far above the reach of common Capacities? certainly, Divine Wiſdom could not be ſo much wanting to the Bulk of Mankind, but would have provided better for them, in a *ſcriptural* way; and by plain Words, that ſo they might be more beholden to *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* for their *Faith*, than to the Dialecticks of *Ariſtotle*, or *Chryſippus*'s ſubtilties [u]. But I forbear to preſs this further: And having briefly run through all that the Author of *ſober and charitable Diſquiſition* had to urge in favour of the *Arian* Interpretation, both of *John* i. and *Hebr.* i. I muſt now leave it to the impartial Readers to judge, whether any thing has been offered on That Side, which can be thought ſufficient to counterbalance our plain and direct Evidences brought from *expreſs* Words, fixed to a certain Meaning by

[t] Clariſſimis Scripturæ Teſtimoniis Argumentationes *Metaphyſicæ Argutiæ* opponere, *Eunomii* eſt, Qui ab *Aetio* Magiſtro edoctus, eſſentiam divinam penitus ac perfecte ſcilicet cognitam ſibi habere perſuadebat. *Tam perſpicue Deum qualis ſit novi, ac tantam illius notitiam ſum conſecutus, ut ve me ipſum quidam melius quam illum noverim.* Aetius apud Epiphanium lxxvi. p. 916, 989. Eunomius ipſe, majore etiam Inſolentia apud Socratem, iv. 7. *De ſui ipſius eſſentia, Deus nihil amplius ſcit quam nos: Nec illa ipſi quidem notior, nobis autem obſcurior.* Fabric. Bibl. Græc l. v. c. 23. p. 272. *Conf.* Baſil. contr. Eunom l. i. p. 224. Theodorit. Hæret. Fab. l. iv. c. 3. Cyrill. Alex. Theſaur. p. 260. Chryſoſt. Hom. 27. Tom. i. p. 307. Philoſtorg. l. i. p. 468, 470. Ed. Valeſ. Gregor. Nazianz. Orat. 34. p. 539.

[u] Vid. Baſil. contr. Eunom. l. i. p. 214, 221.

all

all the approved Rules of *Grammar* and *Criticism*, and confirmed by the *universal* Suffrage of the *first* and *purest* Ages. Thus far I was obliged to enter into a small Part of the other Controversy, which affects the *Truth* of the Doctrine, rather than the *Importance*; because, as I hinted in the Entrance, The Author I am concerned with, had mingled them in some sort together. But They who desire fuller Satisfaction in that other Question, may please to consult Those Treatises which are professedly written upon it. What comes in here, amounts only to slight Touches, and so far only as related to the Texts mentioned: Which tho' justly reckoned *definitive* on our Side, are yet but a very slender Part of what the whole Scripture affords us in That Cause.

AD-

ADDENDA.

Additional Illuſtrations referring to the reſpective Pages above.

Page 18. *Ideas of Intellect*, &c. The Diſtinction between Ideas of *Intellect* and Ideas of *Imagination*, is much inſiſted on by *Des Cartes* in his Metaphyſicks[a], and is explained more clearly and to better Advantage in a late judicious Treatiſe written by Mr. *Crouſaz* in *French*, and now rendred into *Engliſh*[b].

P. 79. *The ſame with denying his eternal Exiſtence.* I ſhould have omitted the Word *denying*, or elſe have ſaid, *the ſame with denying* the Neceſſity of believing *his eternal Exiſtence*. All I meant to ſay was, that *Epiſcopius* (which is true alſo of *Limborch*) did not diſtinguiſh in that Inſtance between the *eternal Generation* of the Logos, and the *eternal Exiſtence*; as ſome of the *Antients* did[c].

P. 111. *Such Effects might laſt beyond the Apoſtolick Age.* I might have expreſſed my ſelf with greater Aſſurance, and ſaid, that

[a] Carteſii Meditat. vi. p. 36. Object. v. p. 45. Reſponſ. v. p. 78.

[b] Crouſaz, New Treatiſe of the Art of Thinking, Vol. i. p. 16, *&c.*

[c] See my *Defence*, Q. viii. p. 161, 162.

[d] *Second Defence*, Q. viii. p. 322.

they

they actually did laſt as far down as to the *Cyprianick* Age [d]: Nay, and if we may believe *Paulinus* [e], who reports it as an Eye-Witneſs, they continued down to the latter end of the fourth Century. From whence may fairly be accounted for, the long Continuance of the Phraſe of *delivering over to Satan*, in Excommunications [f]. Indeed, the Uſe of the Form remained afterwards, when ſuch *miraculous* Effects had intirely ceaſed: Becauſe the Form had been cuſtomary from the Beginning; and becauſe it might ſtill be underſtood in a Senſe not altogether foreign to its firſt Intention, ſuch as I have expreſſed above.

P. 126. *He may be in ſome meaſure hurt in his Reputation by it, and That is all.* I would be underſtood here of the *general* Caſe only [g], abſtracting from particular Caſes and Circumſtances; as of *Miniſters*, ſuppoſe, whoſe *Maintenance* alſo may be accidentally affected by it. An Inconvenience common to *Eccleſiaſtical*

[d] See *Dodwell* Diſſertat. in Iren. ii. 54. p. 191——194.

[e] Quem cum interrogaſſet [*Ambroſius*] et deprehendiſſet Autorem tanti flagitii, ait: Oportet illum *tradi Satanæ in interitum Carnis*, ne talia in poſterum audeat admittere: Quem eodem momento, cum adhuc Sermo eſſet in ore Sacerdotis, ſpiritus immundus arreptum diſcerpere cœpit. Quo viſo, non minimo Timore repleti ſumus et Admiratione. *Paulin. in vit. Ambroſ.* p. 9.

[f] See Biſhop *Hare*, Scripture vindicated, p. 69, 70.

[g] Denique bono aut æquo non contraria eſt *Excommunicationis* Pœna, qua nulla manſuetior. Non admovet *flagra* Corporibus, non aptat *vincula*, non denuntiat *mortem*, non eripit *Bona*, non abdicat *Dignitates*; Indignis abnuit Sacramenta quibus in Perniciem ſuam abuterentur. Itaque tota et ad Dei Gloriam et ad Peccantis ſalutem eſt comparata. *Sam. Baſnag. Annal.* Tom. ii. p. 481.

Offices or *Civil*, as often as Men diſable themſelves from ſerving, either by refuſing to give the legal Securities, or by oppoſing the publick Meaſures.

P. 127. *Or to pay them ſo much as common Civilities.* That is to ſay, when ſuch Civilities were likely to be interpreted as an Approbation of the Men and of their Principles. But ſee This Rule of the Apoſtle conſidered more at large, under its proper Reſtrictions and Limitations, by an able Hand [h].

P. 155. *A wicked Life the worſt Hereſy, which is ſcarce Senſe*, &c. At the beſt, it is a *ſtrong Figure*, or a turn of Wit, and the Thought *not juſt* upon the whole. But ſomething of it may be traced up as high as to St. *Bernard* of the 12th Century, who argued that vitious Perſons were *Seducers* by their bad Example, and therefore were a kind of *Hereticks* in Practice, corrupting more by their *ill Lives*, than Hereticks, properly ſo called, could do by their *bad Doctrines* [i]: And he applies it particularly to vitious Clergymen; not to extenuate the Guilt of *Hereſy*, but to inhance the Guilt of ſuch *bad Example*. The Thought was not much amiſs, if he had not carried it too far. He ſhould not have ſuggeſted, that Bad Example is

[h] Dr. *Berriman*'s Sermon, in the Appendix to his *Boyle*'s *Lectures*, Vol. ii. p. 339.

[i] Multi ſunt Catholici *prædicando*, qui Hæretici ſunt *operando*. Quod Hæretici faciunt per *prava dogmata*, hoc faciunt plures hodie per *mala exempla*: Seducunt ſcilicet Populum et inducunt in *errorem*; et tanto graviores ſunt *Hæreticis* quanto prævalent opera verbis. *Bernard. Serm.* ad *Paſtores*, p. 1732.

worſe

worſe than *Hereſy* properly ſo called. It is true, that Bad Example commonly will do more harm than ſound Preaching will do good; becauſe ſuch Example runs in with *corrupt Nature*, and the other is *contrary*: But if the Doctrine be on the ſame Side, it will do infinitely more Miſchief; and one *looſe Caſuiſt* will debauch more than a hundred others ſhall do who are only *looſe* in their *Lives*. Bad Example under the Check and Diſcountenance of *ſound Doctrine* taught by the ſame Perſon, carries its Antidote along with it. But bad Doctrine is a very dangerous Snare: It is not merely breaking a Law, but looſening the *Authority* of all [k]. Therefore *Bernard* ſtrained the Thought too far: And ſo did Dean *Colet* after Him [l]; who is the firſt Man I have met

[k] "Who will maintain that a Prince would do better in "*changing* the Laws according to his preſent Paſſions, than to "let them ſubſiſt, and *break* them every Hour? No body. For, "if He obſerves not the Laws as He ſhould, He leaves them "their *Authority* however, with reſpect to his Subjects and ſuch "other Princes as are willing to obſerve them; which is abſo-"lutely neceſſary to Society.—— If it be aſked then, which Car-"riage is moſt *dangerous* and *blameable*, that of ſuch as *violate* the "Laws of the Goſpel which they believe to be divine, or That "of the incredulous who *reject* the Divinity of thoſe Laws, be-"cauſe they have no mind to obey them; it is plain that the "latter is much *worſe* than the former, ſuppoſing the Laws of "the Goſpel to be beneficial to Society, which cannot be "doubted. *Le Clerc* Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 88, 89.

The Caſe which *Le Clerc* here puts, is not preciſely the *ſame* with the other, but the *Reaſon* is the ſame for Both.

[l] "He ſheweth plainly, that there be two kinds of Hereſies, "one ariſing from *perverſe teaching*, and the other from a naugh-"ty Life: Of which two this latter is far *worſe* and more peril-"lous, reigning now in Prieſts. *Colet*'s Sermon before the Convo-cation, A. D. 1511. reprinted in the *Phœnix*, Vol. i. p. 7.

with, that ventured formally to ſay (for *Bernard* had not expreſſed the Figure ſo boldly) that a *Bad Life was a Hereſy*, and the *worſt* Hereſy. However, neither of them intended to extenuate the Guilt of *Hereſy* at all, but to magnify another kind of Guilt, as ſtill *greater* according to their way of Reaſoning, or rather Rhetoricating.

Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* glances upon the ſame Thought [m], but gives a very different Turn to it; and cannot, I think, be reaſonably underſtood of Hereſy *ſtrictly* and *properly* ſuch, but of what ſome have wrongfully *called* ſo. Biſhop *Taylor*, a very moderate Man, in a Treatiſe written on the ſide of *Liberty*, may be a very proper Arbitrator, to clear and determine the whole Diſpute.

"Men think, they have more reaſon to be "zealous againſt *Hereſy* than againſt a *Vice* "in Manners, becauſe it is *infectious* and

[m] *Tillotſon*'s Sermons, Vol. i. p. 402. Fol. Edit. His Reflection upon Thoſe who were too cenſorious in charging *Hereſy* upon others, and at the ſame time too indulgent to their own *Vices*, runs thus:

"Deluded People! that do not conſider, that *the greateſt* "*Hereſy in the World is a wicked Life*, becauſe it is ſo directly op- "poſite to the whole Deſign of the Chriſtian Faith and Reli- "gion; and that do not conſider, that God will ſooner forgive "a Man a hundred *Defects* of his *Underſtanding*, than one *Fault* "of his *Will*.

N. B. Hereſy, juſtly ſo called, is not a mere *Defect* of Underſtanding, but a *Fault* of the *Will*: And it is more *directly oppoſite* to Religion than common Offences; as overturning the *Authority* of a Law is worſe than *tranſgreſſing* it, or as *Mutiny*, *Sedition*, and *Rebellion* are worſe than common Felonies.

"*dangerous*,

" *dangerous*, and the *Principle of much Evil.*
" Indeed, if by Hereſy we mean that which is
" againſt an *Article of the Creed*, and breaks
" part of the *Covenant* between God and
" Man by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, I
" grant it to be a *grievous Crime*, a calling
" God's Veracity in Queſtion, and a *Deſtruc-*
" *tion* alſo of a *good Life*; becauſe upon the
" Articles of the Creed *Obedience* is *built*, and
" it lives or dies as the *Effect* does by its proper
" *Cauſe:* For, *Faith* is the moral Cauſe of
" *Obedience.* But then *Hereſy*, that is, ſuch
" as This, is alſo a *Vice*, and the Perſon *Cri-*
" *minal*, and ſo the Sin is to be eſteemed in
" its Degrees of *Malignity.* And let Men be
" as *zealous* againſt it as they can, and employ
" the whole Arſenal of the *ſpiritual* Armour
" againſt it. Such as This, is *worſe* than *Adul-*
" *tery* or *Murder*; in as much as the *Soul* is
" more noble than the *Body*, and a falſe Doc-
" trine is of greater Diſſemination and *Extent*
" than a ſingle Act of *Violence* or *Impurity.*
" Adultery or Murder is a *Duel*, but Hereſy
" (truly and indeed ſuch) is an unlawful *War*,
" it ſlays *Thouſands.* The loſing of Faith is
" digging down a *Foundation:* All the *Super-*
" *ſtructure* of Hope and Patience and Charity
" fall with it.—— But then concerning Thoſe
" Things which Men now a-days *call* Hereſy,
" they cannot be ſo formidable as they are
" repreſented. And if we conſider that
" *Drunkenneſs* is certainly a damnable Sin,
" and that there are *more* Drunkards than

"Hereticks, and that Drunkenneſs is the *Pa-*
"*rent* of a *Thouſand Vices*, it may be better
"ſaid of this Vice than of moſt of thoſe *Opi-*
"*nions* which we *call* Hereſies, it is *infectious*
"and *dangerous*, and the *Principle of much*
"*Evil*, and therefore as fit an Object of our
"pious *Zeal* to conteſt againſt [n], &c." Thus far Biſhop *Taylor*.

In the Sum of the Matter, I entirely agree with him. The Reſult, I think, is, that *nominal* Hereſy, or an *Error* in ſlight Matters, not affecting the *Foundation*, not hurting the *Vitals* of Chriſtianity, is not ſo bad as *real* Immorality: And it is equally true, on the other Hand, that *nominal* Immorality is not ſo bad as *real* Error in Religion, tho' in the ſlighter Doctrines. But ſuppoſing the Error and the maintaining of it to amount to *real* Hereſy, it is then a *Vice*, and the *greateſt* of Vices: So the whole will turn upon the Nature, Quality and Tendency of what is charged as an *Hereſy*. *Invincible Ignorance* will equally excuſe any *other* Vice; and ſo is wide of the Purpoſe.

P. 196. *All Parties are for Creeds under one Shape or other.* It may be aſked perhaps, what *Creed* the *Scepticks* are for, who profeſs to *doubt* of every Thing? I anſwer, that their pretended *Scepticiſm* is moſtly *Affectation*, and they generally are as *Credulous* as other Men; frequently more ſo If they believe leſs of *Religion*, as ſome of them perhaps may, yet

[n] *Taylor*'s Liberty of Prophecying, Dedicat. p. 42, 43.

They

They are eaſy of Belief as to any thing elſe. They have their *Syſtems*, their *Maxims*, their *Probabilities* (as they are pleaſed to call them) which make up as long and large *Creeds* as our *Certainties* do: Only there is This Difference, that they commonly prefer a Creed of *Paradoxes*, and ſometimes glaring *Abſurdities*, before a *rational* Faith. And while we believe as much as we can *prove*, and no more (which is believing like *wiſe* Men) They believe what they have a mind to, *proving nothing*, by their own Confeſſion; which is reſolving all into fond Perſuaſion and Credulity.

The moſt conſiderable Writer, I know of, that ever appeared in behalf of general *Scepticiſm* (matters of Faith only excepted) is the celebrated *Huetius*, in a poſthumous Treatiſe [o], written, I ſuppoſe, for an Exerciſe of Wit, to divert himſelf and Friends; unleſs He had ſome further latent View to ſerve the *Romiſh* Cauſe. I may remark, that one Article of his Sceptical *Creed* is, that the Certainty of Faith is ſuperior to that of *Senſe*: A ſecond is, that it is ſuperior even to That of the *firſt Principles* and *Axioms* of *Geometry* [p]. One cannot deſire any two plainer Inſtances of the *Credulity* of a Sceptick. I mention not, how often He forgets the Part he was to act, talking in the Stile of a *Dogmatiſt*: *Sure it is*, or *it is certain* [q]. Sometimes, He is *fully perſuaded* [r],

[o] A Philoſophical Treatiſe concerning the Weakneſs of human Underſtanding. *Printed in Engliſh*, London, 1725.

[p] Huet. Philoſoph. Treatiſe, *&c.* p. 15.

[q] p. 28, 30, 34, 68, 75, 98, 150. [r] p. 7.

or *fully convinced*[r], or *certainly knows*[s]. At other times, He ſpeaks of *evident Proof*[t], and *irrefragable Argument*[x], and *Demonſtration*,[y] juſt as any *Dogmatiſt* would do. So hard a Thing is it for the fineſt Wit, even to *perſonate* a *Sceptick* with any tolerable Grace, or without perpetual Inconſiſtency: For which Reaſon I before hinted that I look upon *Scepticiſm*, ſo called, to be little elſe but *Affectation*. Or if there really be any ſuch kind of Men who *believe* that they *believe nothing*, That very Inſtance is an undeniable Argument of their more than common *Credulity*. Indeed, for a Man to fall to *arguing* and *proving* that there is no ſuch Thing as *Proof* or *Argument*, is much the ſame as if one ſhould make an eloquent Harangue, lamenting that mortal Men have not the Faculty of *Speech*, loudly complaining that all Mankind are *Mutes*.

P. 198. *Our way ſuppoſes that Men ought to examine (if capable,* and as far as capable) *in order to* know *that the Doctrine propoſed is true.* If it ſhould be asked, what *need* of Examination after ſo many wiſe and good Men, and all morally *certain*; I would ask again, what need is there of ſtudying the *Demonſtrations* of *Euclid* which all the World agree in, as containing *certain* Truth? A Man might ſafely enough take them for granted, and by ſo doing might as ſoon become a *ſound Geometrician*, as by the like Method, in the other

[r] p. 33 [s] p. 14. [t] p. 40. [x] p. 52.
[y] P. 99, comp. 100, 104.

Caſe,

Caſe, He might commence a *ſound Divine*, or a *confirmed Chriſtian*. At beſt, it would be reſting Faith upon mere *human* Authority, which would be reſting it on a *wrong* Bottom; and beſides, would be neglecting the due Improvement of the Heart, and Cultivation of the Mind.

But may there not be *Danger* in examining, Danger of being led to *diſſent* from what is *right*, and to embrace ſome *Error*? Undoubtedly there may. And what Conveniency is there without ſome Inconveniency? Such Danger muſt be risked, rather than found our Faith upon a wrong Principle, to render it worthleſs or contemptible: And it is better to hazard the *Chance* of falling into ſome *Error* in *Faith*, than to be *certain* of committing a *greater* Error in *Conduct*. However, if Men come with *Humility*, *Modeſty*, and *Circumſpection* to the Examination, and have Patience to ſtay till They are *clear*, before they formally *diſſent*, or before they declare it *openly*; there will be no great *Danger* in examining every Thing with the utmoſt Severity.

P. 200. *The Phraſe of having Dominion over ones Faith, is of obſcure Meaning*, &c. I did not then call to mind how well the Meaning of that Phraſe had been lately cleared up by a very learned Hand [y].

P. 257. *The Darkneſs cometh not upon it.* I referred to a very judicious Critick, *Lambert Bos*,

[y] Biſhop *Hare*. Scripture Vindicated, p. 60.——63.

for

for the juſtifying my rendring of this Text. I find ſince, that the learned *Wolfius* diſapproves of what *Bos* had offered [z]: But I abide by *Bos* notwithſtanding, who plainly has Reaſon on his Side. He did not inſiſt merely upon the Force of the *Word* καταλαβεῖν, but upon the *Phraſe*, upon the Verb as joined with σκότος, or σκοτία. The Examples which he gives from *ſacred* and *profane* Writers, of the Uſe of the *Phraſe*, are all clear and full to his Purpoſe. And if there be need of additional Examples from *Eccleſiaſtical* Writers, there are ſeveral; as *Origen* [a], *Cyril* of *Alexandria* [b], and *Theophylact* [c]. *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, in his Comment (if it be his) ſeems to take in Both the Senſes of that Verb into his Conſtruction of the Text [d]. As to the Alluſion to the *Gnoſtick* Principles (I uſe the Word *Gnoſtick* in the larger Senſe) which I ſuppoſe in the Words of St. *John*, neither *Bos* nor *Wolfius* take notice, nor ſeem to have been aware of it. But

[z] Ingenioſior quam verior hîc eſt *Lamb. Bos* interpretatio —— quod natura λόγε ſanctiſſima et puriſſima ſit, nec minimam cum impuritate habet Communionem. Quæ notio quamvis in N. T. et apud ipſum *Joannem* noſtrum, Cap. xii. 35. occurrat, ab hoc tamen loco *aliena* merito cenſetur, in quo non tam quid *Tenebræ* in Chriſtum molitæ ſint, aut moliri potuerint, quam quod Chriſtus in *Tenebras* molitus ſit, exponitur. Conf. v. 10, 11. —— Itaque rectius notio illa vocis καταλαβεῖν hic tenetur, quæ *Receptionem* aut *Agnitionem* infert. Hanc enim N. T. Scriptoribus imprimis familiarem eſſe patet ex *Actor.* v. 13. Rom. ix. 30. *Wolfii curæ Philolog. et Crit.* in loc. Vol. i. p. 784.

[a] Origen. Comment. in Johan. Edit. Huet. p. 73, 74.

[b] *Cyril. Alex.* Comment. in Johann. p. 23.

[c] Theophylact. in loc. p. 561.

[d] Clemens Alex. Excerpt. Theodoti. p. 969. Edit. Ox.

if the Obſervation be *juſt*, as it appears very *probable* (and I ſhall ſay more of it preſently) That alſo is a Confirmation of ſuch Senſe of the Phraſe as *Bos* pleads for; and the Two Conſiderations taken together, anſwer very aptly to each other, which is an Argument that Both are right.

258. *The antient* Magian *Notion of a good God and an evil God, the firſt called* Light, *and the other* Darkneſs, *&c.* A brief Account of that antient Notion may be ſeen in Dean *Prideaux*[e], and a large Hiſtory both of its Riſe and Progreſs among the *Pagans*, in *Wolfius*[f]. And how the ſame Notion was revived, or augmented with new Fooleries, among the Hereticks of the Apoſtolical Times, may be underſtood from a noted Fragment of *Baſilides*, preſerved by *Archelaus* of the Third Century, in his Account of his *Diſputation* with *Manes*[g]. Now, conſidering that *Cerinthus*

[e] *Prideaux*'s Connection, Vol. i. p. 179. 8vo. Edit.

[f] *Wolfii* Manichæiſmus ante Manichæum, Sect. ii. p. 48.—174.

[g] The Fragment of *Baſilides* is as follows.

" Deſine ab inani et curioſa varietate; requiramus autem " magis quæ de *bonis* et *malis* etiam Barbari inquiſiêrunt, et in " quas opiniones de his omnibus pervenerunt. Quidam enim " Horum dixerunt, *Initia* omnium *duo* eſſe, quibus *bona* et *mala* " aſſociaverunt, ipſa dicentes initia eſſe et ingenita: Id eſt, in " principiis, *Lucem* fuiſſe ac *Tenebras*, quæ ex ſemetipſis erant, " non quæ eſſe dicebantur. Hæc cum apud ſemetipſa eſſent, " proprium unum quodque eorum vitam agebat quam vellet, et " qualis ſibi competeret: Omnibus enim amicum eſt quod eſt " proprium, et nihil ſibi ipſi malum videtur. Poſtquam autem " ad alterutrûm agnitionem uterque pervenit, et *Tenebræ* con- " templatæ ſunt *Lucem*, tanquam melioris rei ſumpta concupiſ- " centia, *inſectabantur* ea commiſceri. *Archel. et Manet. Diſput.* p. 194.

thus was among Thoſe who had adopted the old Notion of a *good God* and an *evil God*, (as *Epiphanius* has informed us [h]) and ſo of courſe muſt have fallen in with the old *Magian* Principles; *Baſilides* may reaſonably be allowed of as a good Interpreter of *Cerinthus* in thoſe Articles: And ſince St. *John*, very manifeſtly ſtruck at ſeveral other Tenets of *Cerinthus*, in his divine Proeme, it is more than probable that what He ſays in verſe the 5th about *Light* and *Darkneſs*, alludes to the *Gnoſtick* Notion then prevailing, and is a Confutation of it [i]. They pretended that The evil God Darkneſs *purſued* The Light, and came up to it: He aſſerts, that the Darkneſs *came not upon it*, never laid hold of it, never approached to obſtruct or obſcure it, but was irradiated and illuminated by it. It may further be conſidered, that *Baſilides*, probably, flouriſhed in the *firſt Century*, and might be Contemporary

p. 194. Fabric. Conf. *Wolf. Manich.* p. 177. *Grab. Spicileg.* Vol. ii. p. 30.

[h] Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxviii. 2. p. 111.

[i] Accordingly, *Archelaus* (in his Diſpute with *Manes*) confutes that Hypotheſis from this very Text; which is a great Confirmation not only of the *Conſtruction* of the Phraſe before given, but likewiſe of ſuch *Application* of the Text as I have been pleading for. His Words are:

" Quomodo et ipſe [malus Deus] cum ſit omnino totus *Te-*
" *nebræ*, Luci ſupervenit et comprehendit, Evangeliſta Teſti-
" monium ferente, quia *Lucet in Tenebris, et Tenebræ eam non com-*
" *prehenderunt?*

" How could it be that The *evil God*, being that He is all
" Darkneſs, ſhould *come upon* upon the Light, and *compaſs* it,
" when the Evangeliſt declares, that the Light ſhined *through*
" *the Darkneſs, and the Darkneſs compaſſed it not.*

with

with St. *John*, as both *Jerome* [i] and *Epiphanius* [k] ſeem to aſſert: And tho' learned Men have diſputed it, yet [l] *Maſſuet* appears to have well cleared up the Point againſt the moſt material Objections. Now, if *Baſilides* himſelf was ſo early, it is ſo much the more likely that St. *John*, writing at that Time, might have an Eye to the pernicious Doctrine then propagated by Him, and by the whole Sett of *Gnoſticks*. By *Gnoſticks* I underſtand all that ſort of Men, who derived their Principles from *Simon Magus*, and lived in the Apoſtolick Age; tho' I am aware that in a ſtricter and more ſpecial Senſe [m], The *Gnoſticks* may be ſaid to have riſen up in the *Second* Century.

P. 299. *Irenæus born in or near the Apoſtles Times, and was advanced in Years when he wrote.* I here follow *Dodwell* in a Matter which requires not, and indeed admits not of a ſcrupulous or critical Exactneſs. However, ſince *Dodwell* has been blamed by more than one, for his Chronology in that Article, I may juſt mention how the different Accounts ſtand in relation to the Year when *Irenæus* was born. According to *Dodwell*. A. D. 97. *Grabe* chuſes the Year 108. *Tillemont*, the Year 120: Others, 135. *Maſſuet* ſets it the lateſt of all, A. D. 140. According to which different Computations, *Irenæus* muſt be ſup-

[i] Hieronym. contr. Luciſer. p. 304. Opp. Tom. iv. Bened. Ed.
[k] Epiphan. Hæreſ. xxxi. 2.
[l] *Maſſuet.* Diſſertat. præv. in Irenæum, p. 60.
[m] See *Wolfius.* Manichæiſmus, &c. p. 206.
[n] *Buddeus* Eccleſ. Apoſtol. p. 344, 345, 571, &c.

poſed

poſed either *older* or *younger* when he wrote, if He wrote in 176, or thereabouts, as moſt agree that He did: Tho' ſome differ alſo as to That, ſetting the Date of his Writings 10 or 15 Years lower.

P. 438. *In Strictneſs they were not* Interpretations *of Scripture, but rather pious Meditations upon Scripture: I am ſenſible that ſome of them were intended as* ſtrict *Interpretations: But in the general*, &c.

To confirm and illuſtrate what I have here ſaid, it may be obſerved, that St. *Auſtin* took into the *Allegorical* way of interpreting, when He was yet but a *new Convert*, becauſe He thought it much *eaſier* than the *literal* way, which He was not then ſo well prepared for. He had not at that time (ſo he tells us himſelf [n]) ſufficient Leiſure or Abilities to undertake ſo hard a Province as the unfolding the *literal* Senſe, and therefore contented Himſelf with giving only the *Myſtical*, or *Allegorical*. Could a ſenſible Man ſo ſpeak, and at the ſame time imagine that the *myſti-*

[n] Et quia non mihi tunc occurrebant omnia quemadmodum *proprie* poſſint accipi, magiſque non poſſe accipi videbantur, aut vix poſſe, aut difficile; ne retardarer, quid *figurate* ſignificarent ea *quæ ad literam non potui invenire*, quanta volui Brevitate et perſpicuitate explicavi, ne vel multa Lectione vel Diſputationis obſcuritate deterriti, in manus ea ſumere non curarent. *Auguſtin. de Gen. ad Liter.* l. viii. c. 2. p. 227. Tom. iii. Bened.

Note, That St. *Auſtin* in the Year 389, then a new Convert, ventured no farther than the *Allegorical* Expoſition of *Geneſis*: But in the Year 401, He undertook the *literal* Explication alſo, in xii Books [*de Geneſi ad Literam*] which He finiſhed about 415.

cal

cal Conſtruction He pretended to give, was the true Mind of the Holy Ghoſt? Or could he conceive that he had any *certain* Foundation for the *myſtical* Senſe (ſo conſidered) before he had found out the *literal* one to ground it upon? No ſurely. But thinking Himſelf at liberty to raiſe any *true* and *inſtructive* Moral from the Text, he gave it as a *good Leſſon* to ruminate upon, rather than as a *ſtrict Interpretation* of the Words before him. He, and other Allegorizers like Him, might apprehend that dry Hiſtory, or a mere Narrative of Facts, would be unentertaining, or unedifying to common Readers or Hearers, and therefore They had a mind to furniſh them with proper Meditations, *moral* and *religious*, to graft upon ſuch parts of ſacred Writ; that ſo whenever they ſhould hear or read any Scripture-Hiſtory, ſuch Reflections alſo might occur to their Minds, for improving the ſame to *ſpiritual* Uſes °. And whether ſuch ſpiritual Uſes were really intended in ſuch Place by the ſacred Penman, or no, yet if the Words might be but aptly accommodated thereto, and were but pertinently and ſoberly applied, and the Analogy of Faith

° Eo minus vero mirandum, quod veteris Eccleſiæ Doctoribus hæc ipſa (*allegorica*) Scripturarum explicandi ratio placuerit, quod et illi crederent, in Scripturæ Lectione unice hoc agendum, ut quæ *Fidem* alere ac fovere, *vitamque inſtruere* poſſunt, inde hauriamus, reliqua non magnopere ad nos pertinere.—— Prevaluit fere *myſtica* illa et *allegorica* interpretandi ratio; pluribuſque, ob inſignem quem in vitæ fideique praxi habere videbatur uſum, ſe commendabat. *Buddæi Iſagog. Vol.* ii. p. 1786.

preſerved,

preſerved, a good End was anſwered thereby; and true *Doctrine* at leaſt kept, if not true *Interpretation* [p].

Neverthleſs it muſt be owned that the *Allegorizing* Fathers did ſometimes intend ſuch Comments as ſtrict and proper *Interpretations*; particularly, where they thought that the obvious *literal* Meaning carried ſome *Abſurdity* in it, or elſe was too *low* and *trivial* to be the *whole* Deſign of the ſacred Writer, or Spirit of God. They had St. *Paul*'s Example to go upon: *Doth God*, ſays He, *take care for Oxen* [q]? Intimating that ſuch *literal* Interpretation, *ſingly* conſidered, was too *low* and *jejune* a Senſe to fix upon the Law in *Deuteronomy* [r], and that therefore there was a Neceſſity of ſuppoſing ſome *higher Meaning*, and good reaſon for looking out for one. The like might be the Caſe with other Paſſages of the Old Teſtament, and very probably is: And ſo the *Fathers* endeavoured, wherever they apprehended any Neceſſity of riſing above the *Letter*, to ſearch out the *myſtical* Intendment; and in their Searches of that kind They ſome-

[p] Cum divinos libros legimus, in tanta multitudine verorum, intellectuum qui de paucis verbis eruuntur, et ſanitate Catholicæ Fidei muniuntur, id potiſſimum deligamus quod certum apparuerit eum ſenſiſſe quem legimus. Si autem hoc latet, id certe quod *circumſtantia Scripturæ* non impedit, et cum *Sana Fide* concordat. Si autem et Scripturæ circumſtantia pertractari ac diſcuti non poteſt, ſaltem id ſolum quod *Fides Sana* præſcribit. Aliud eſt enim quid potiſſimum Scriptor ſenſerit non dignoſcere, aliud a *Regula pietatis* errare ——— Si voluntas Scriptoris *incerta* ſit, *Sanæ Fidei* congruam non inutile eſt eruiſſe Sententiam. *Auguſtin.* de Gen. ad Literam. l. i. c. 41. p. 132.

[q] 1 Cor. ix. 9. [r] Deuteron. xxv. 4.

times

times indulged their Fancies too far, giving their own Conjectures (but modeſtly, and within the Analogy of Faith) for the Senſe of Scripture. And what *Commentator* is there that may not ſometimes, or often, miſtake in interpreting the *obſcure* Places of ſacred Writ? A *good Senſe*, that is to ſay, a Senſe conſiſtent with *ſound* Doctrine, every wiſe Man will be ſure to make choice of: But as to the *true Senſe* of the Place, in ſuch Inſtances, it is what the wiſeſt cannot often be ſure of, or take upon them to warrant.

I ſhall only add, that in order to form a more diſtinct Idea of the *antient* ways of interpreting, it may be proper to bear in mind that *Three-fold* Method of commenting which St. *Jerome* lays down [a]; namely, the *Hiſtorical*, *Tropological*, and *Theorical*: or, in more familiar Terms, the *literal*, *moral*, and *ſublime*. The firſt of the Three looked only to the *grammatical* Meaning of the Words, for the Information of the Hearers: The other Two

[a] Triplex in corde noſtro Deſcriptio et Regula Scripturarum eſt. Prima, ut intelligamus eas juxta *Hiſtoriam:* Secunda, juxta *Tropologiam:* Tertia, juxta intelligentiam *Spiritualem*.

1. In *Hiſtoria*, eorum quæ ſcripta ſunt ordo ſervatur:

2. In *Tropologia*, de litera ad *majora* conſurgimus; et quidquid in priori populo carnaliter factum eſt, juxta *moralem* interpretamur locum, et ad animæ noſtræ Emolumenta convertimus.

3. In *Spirituali Θεωρία*, ad *ſublimiora* tranſimus, terrena dimittimus, de futurorum Beatitudine et cæleſtibus diſputamus, ut præſentis vitæ meditatio umbra futuræ Beatitudinis ſit.

Hieronym. ad Hedib. Tom. IV. p. 186. Edit. Bened.

aimed at *improving* their *Morals*, and *elevating* their *Affections*: Which Ends might be, in a good measure, answered by apposite Meditations upon the Text, tho' they should not happen to be *true* Interpretations. And it was that Consideration chiefly, as I conceive, which made the *Fathers* take the more Freedom in *moralizing* and *spiritualizing* (if I may so speak) the *Letter* of sacred Writ. See the last Passage which I quoted from St. *Austin*, intimating as much.

P. 468. *Men of as great Sense, Learning and Piety, to all outward Appearance, as any in their Times, have sometimes fallen into Heresy.* I might mention *Tertullian*, *Apollinaris*, and several more[a]. But it has been suggested by some Persons, that according to the Scripture Account of *Heresy*, none were chargeable with it, but Men who *knowingly* espoused *false* Doctrine, who were directly *self-condemned* as teaching what they *knew* to be *wrong*, Men of *vile* and *dishoneſt* Principles, and of a *flagitious* Character; in short, *Monsters* of Lewdness or Impiety. And all this is grounded upon the scattered Descriptions given of several kinds of *Hereticks*, in several parts of the New Testament. I have not here room to consider this whole Matter at large; nor is it necessary I should, since I have obviated the main of it in the preceding Sheets: But

[a] *Vid.* Vincent. Lirinenſ. c. xv, xvi, xxiii, xxiv.

to

to prevent any Perſon's being impoſed upon by ſuch Suggeſtions, I may here throw in a few brief, and I hope, pertinent Conſiderations.

1. All Hereſies mentioned in Scripture were not of *equal* Malignity. It is not right to apply to *all*, what was true of *ſome* only; or to draw together all the ill Features of ſeveral Sects, or Men, into one Picture of Deformity, and to make it ſerve for the Picture of every Individual.

2. The Apoſtles do not charge all the falſe Teachers with *flagitious*, or openly *ſcandalous* Lives, and *lewd* Doctrines, but the *Nicolaitans* chiefly, if not ſolely.

3. Some others are charged with *Secularity*, and *ſelfiſh* Views, but not all. The Apoſtles, having the Gift of *diſcerning Spirits*, and writing by the *Spirit of God*, might juſtly ſo charge them: Otherwiſe many of them might have paſſed, and would have paſſed as Perſons of a *fair Character*, full of *godly Zeal* [b], and *Miniſters of Righteouſneſs* [c]. It was to prevent their paſſing for ſuch, that the Apoſtles took the Advantage they extraordinarily had, to *expoſe* the *ſecret* Views of the Men, leſt They ſhould deceive whole Churches by a fair outward Deportment.

4. As to Thoſe whom the Apoſtles ſo charged with *ſiniſter Views*, or *corrupt Motives*,

[b] Gal. iv. 17. [c] 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15.

it cannot be proved that They taught what they *knew* to be *false*, or *believed* to be *wrong*: But their *Inclinations* governed their *Faith*, and They eaſily *believed* what their *Paſſions*, *Pride*, *Vanity* or *Popularity* ſuggeſted to them; which is a very common Caſe[d]. So that it does not appear that thoſe falſe Apoſtles were formally *ſelf-condemned*, or any otherwiſe than as all falſe Teachers and Evil Doers are ſelf-condemned, when they *might* know and do better; tho' many of them enjoy great *Self-Satisfaction*.

5. Whatever the Motives of ſuch Men were, the Apoſtles did not anathematize them for their *corrupt Motives*, but for their *corrupt Doctrines*; which would have deſerved the ſame *Anathema* tho' taught with the *beſt Intention*, and moſt upright Views, either by the *Apoſtles* themſelves, or by an *Angel* from *Heaven*[e]. St. *John*, in particular, does not ſay, whoſoever upon *ill Motives* abideth not in Chriſt's Doctrine, or bringing not this Doctrine, *receive him not*; but ſimply, whoſoever *tranſgreſſeth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Chriſt*, or *bringeth not this Doctrine*[f]: There lay all the Streſs.

6. *Ill Motives* would corrupt even the *beſt Works*: So, the throwing all the Malignity of

[d] "Men are apt to *believe* what they *deſire*: And the *weakeſt* "Reaſons which perſuade them, appear like *Demonſtrations*. See *Le Clerc*'s whole Chapter on this Head, in his *Parrhaſiana*, Ch. vii. p. 226. *Compare* Cauſes of Incredulity. Part i. c. 1, 2, 3.

[e] Gal. i. 8.

[f] 2 John 9, 10.

Hereſy

Hereſy upon the *ill Motives*, is making no *Fault* of the Hereſy at all, nor ſpecifying any Difference, in moral Account, between preaching the *Truth* of the Goſpel, and *ſubverting* it: For to do either upon wicked Motives is undoubtedly a *wicked Thing*.

7. The Deſign of the Apoſtles in expoſing the *corrupt Views* of Hereticks, was not to *juſtify* their *Anathema*, or *Cenſure* (which was *juſt* without, becauſe of the *Corrupt Doctrine*) but to prevent the Deception of the Simple, who were in Danger of being beguiled by flattering Profeſſions of *Love* and *Tenderneſs* towards Men, and of *Zeal* and *Conſcience* towards God: As is plain in the Caſe of the *Judaizing* Hereticks, who were believing *Phariſees*, and who plauſibly pleaded the *Law* of *God*[a]. To obviate ſuch plauſible and enſnaring Pretences, it was very proper to acquaint the Unwary, that thoſe falſe Teachers were really Men of *ſelfiſh* Views and *ſecular* Aims[b], and were not to be implicitely *truſted* upon over ſo many ſmooth Speeches, or artful Profeſſions, whether of *Friendlineſs*, or *Godlineſs*.

8. Laſtly, let it be noted, that open declared *Libertines* are not the moſt *dangerous* of Hereticks; neither are the *wildeſt* Hereſies, tho' worſt in Quality, the moſt *deſtructive* in their Conſequences. Some Things are too *groſs* to deceive many, and too *ſhocking* to prevail

[a] Acts xv. 5.

[b] Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

much,

much, or long. There is vaſtly greater Danger of the Chriſtian World's running into an *Half-Religion*, than there is of their taking up with *None*, or with one that is plainly *ſcandalous*: And infinitely more, in all likelihood, will at length periſh for not being *good enough*, than for being *Monſters* of Lewdneſs, or Impiety.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

ERRATA.

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